

# *Sons and Lovers*

D.H. LAWRENCE

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## SONS AND LOVERS

Type of work : Novel  
Author : D.H. Lawrence (1885-1930)  
Type of plot : Psychological realism  
Time of plot : Late nineteenth century  
Locale : England.  
First published : 1913

### *Principal Characters :*

Gertrude Morel, a devoted mother  
Walter Morel, her husband, a collier  
William, her oldest son  
Annie, her daughter  
Paul, her favourite son -  
Arthur, another son  
Miriam Levens, Paul's sweetheart  
Clara Dawes, Paul's mistress  
Baxter Dawes, Clara's husband

### *Critique :*

*Sons and Lovers* is a realistic novel developing two significant psychological themes. The first is the story of Paul Morel's beautiful but terrible relationship with his mother, who gives to him all her warmth of feeling because her husband has denied her the love she craves. The second is a study of attraction and repulsion in love, presented through Paul's relations with two quite different women, Clara and Miriam. It is, on the whole, a tragic story of work, love, and despair. Lawrence's psychological insight and the poetry of his style make this novel one of the great landmarks in modern autobiographical fiction.



DAVID HERBERT LAWRENCE  
1885-1930

# SONS AND LOVERS

~~By D. H. Lawrence~~  
D. H. LAWRENCE

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# CONTENTS

PAGES

CHAP.

## PART ONE

1	<i>The Early Married Life of the Mercers</i>	18
2	<i>The Birth of Paul, and another Boy</i>	42
3	<i>The Casting off of Mabel—the Taking on of William</i>	60
4	<i>The Young Life of Paul</i>	72
5	<i>Paul Launches into Life</i>	96
6	<i>Death in the Family</i>	124

## PART TWO

7	<i>Lost-and-Got Love</i>	150
8	<i>Strife in Love</i>	187
9	<i>Defeat of Miriam</i>	200
10	<i>Clara</i>	254
11	<i>The Tact on Miriam</i>	276
12	<i>Patience</i>	290
13	<i>Under Duress</i>	327
14	<i>The Par'ade</i>	370
15	<i>Devilry</i>	401
	<b>BIBLIOGRAPHY</b>	413



### *The Early Married Life of the Miners*

"**T**HE *Barrow*" succeeded to "*Hall Row*." *Hall Row* was a block of thatched, bulging cottages that stood by the broad-side-on Greenhall Lane. There lived the colliers who worked in the little gin-pits two fields away. The track ran under the eider-down, scarcely cooled by those small rains, whose coal was drawn to the surface by dinkies that plodded wearily in a circle round a gin. And all over the countryside were these mine pits, some of which had been worked in the time of Charles II., the first colliers and the dinkies burrowing down like ants into the earth, making queer mounds and little black places among the corn-fields and the meadows. And the crumple of those contrivances, in blades and pans here and there, together with odd farms and houses of the neighbouring, straying over the parish, formed the village of *Barrow*.

Then, some sixty years ago, a sudden change took place. The gin-pits were allowed aside by the large veins of the *limestone*. The coal and iron field of *Northgloucestershire* and *Derbyshire* was discovered. *Carter, White and Co.* appeared. And tremendous enterprises, Lord Palmerston formally opened the company's first mine at *Spawley Park*, on the edge of *Barrow* Forest.

About this time the notorious *Hall Row*, which through growing old had acquired an evil reputation, was burned down, and much sin was cleansed away.

*Carter, White and Co.* found they had made on a good thing, so, down the village of the brooks from *Sellor* and *Musall*, new mines were sunk, until soon there were no pits working. From *Musall*, high up on the sandstone among the woods, the railway ran, past the ruined priory of the *Carthusians* and past *Robin Hood's Well*, down to *Spawley Park*, then on to *Miners*, a large mine among corn-fields, from *Miners* across the three-lands of the countryside to *Ranby's Hill*, branching off there and running north to *Bepperley* and *Sellor*, that looks over at *Crich* and the hills of *Derbyshire*, six mines like black ovals on the countryside, linked by a loop of five chains, the railway.

To accommodate the exigencies of miners, *Carter, White and*



Co. built the Squares, great quadrangles of dwellings on the hillside of Rosewood, and there, in the brook valley, on the site of Hall Row, they erected the Bottoms.

The Bottoms consisted of six blocks of miners' dwellings, two rows of three, like the dorm on a black-and-white, and twelve houses in a block. This double row of dwellings sat at the foot of the rather steep slope from Rosewood, and looked out, from the airy windows at least, on the blue chink of the valley towards Selby.

The houses themselves were substantial and very decent. One could walk all round, seeing little front gardens with variegated and wallflowers in the shadow of the bottom block, sweet-williams and pinks in the sunny top block; seeing neat front windows, little porches, little gravel ledges, and dawning windows for the street. But that was outside; that was the view on to the unshaded passages of all the miners' wives. The dwelling-room, the kitchen, was at the back of the house, facing inward between the blocks, looking at a scrubby back garden, and then at the alleys. And between the rows, between the long lines of sub-pen, went the alley, where the children played and the women peeped and the men smoked. So, the actual conditions of living in the Bottoms, that was so well built and that looked so nice, were quite unsavoury because people must live in the kitchens, and the kitchens opened on to that nasty alley of sub-pen.

Miss Moorl was not anxious to move into the Bottoms, which was already twelve years old and on the downward path, when she descended to it from Rosewood. But it was the best she could do. Moreover, she had an end house in one of the top blocks, and that had only one neighbour on the other side as some scrap of garden. And, having an end house, she enjoyed a kind of aristocracy among the other women of the "between" houses, because her rent was five shillings and expenses instead of five shillings a week. But this superiority in station was not much consolation to Miss Moorl.

She was thirty-one years old, and had been married eight years. A rather small woman, of delicate mould but robust bearing, she shook a little more she first contact with the Bottoms women. She came down in the July, and in the September expected her third baby.

Her husband was a miner. They had only been in their new home three weeks when the winter, on hills, began. Moorl, she knew, was now to make a holiday of it. He went off early on the Monday morning, the day of the fall. The two children were highly excited. William, a boy of seven, fled off immediately after breakfast, to peep round the white ground, leaving Annie, who

was only five, to whom all morning to go also. Mrs. Morel did her work. She usually knew her neighbours' in, and knew no one with whom to trust the little girl. So she promised to take her to the walk after dinner.

William appeared at half-past twelve. He was a very active lad, thin-haired, looked, with a touch of the Dane or Norwegian about him.

"Can I have my dinner, mother?" he cried, rushing in with his cap on. "Cause it begins at half-past one, the man says so."

"You can have your dinner as soon as it's done," replied the mother.

"Isn't it done?" he cried, his blue eyes staring at her in inquiry. "Then I'm gone!" he cut it."

"You'll do nothing of the sort. It will be done in five minutes. It is only half-past twelve."

"They'll be beginnin'," the boy half cried, half shouted.

"You won't do if they do," said the mother. "Besides, it's only half-past twelve, so you've a full hour."

The lad began hardly to lay the table, and directly the three sat down. They were eating butter-pudding and jam, when the boy jumped off his chair and stood perfectly still. Some damage every could be heard the first usual heaving of a merry-go-round, and the twanging of a horn. His face paled as he looked at his mother.

"I told you!" he said, running to the dresser for his cap.

"Take your pudding in your hand—and it's only five past one, so you were wrong—you haven't got your two-pence," cried the mother in a breath.

The boy came back, bitterly disappointed, for his two-pence, then went off without a word.

"I want to go, I want to go," said Annie, beginning to cry.

"Well, and you shall go, whining, wailing like cock!" said the mother. And later in the afternoon she nudged up the hill under the tall hedge with her child. The hay was gathered from the fields, and cattle were turned on to the muck. It was warm, peaceful.

Mrs. Morel did not like the walk. There were two sets of horses, one going by train, one pulled round by a pony; three groups were galloping, and there came odd cracks of pistol-shots, hoarse swooshing of the coconut man's earth, shouts of the Aunt Sally man, screams from the pig-pole lady. The mother perceived but not quite composed outside the Lion Wallace house, at the glimpse of the famous lion that had killed a man; and noticed the little new white car. She left her child, and went to get Annie a spin-off-stuff. Presently the lad stood in front of her, waddy raised.

"You never told you was coming—won't that be a lot of things—but I ain't killed those men—I've spent my supper—an' look here"

He pulled from his pocket two egg-cups, with pink moss-rose on them.

"I got these from that stall where I have to get down, making it down here. An' I got these two in two goes—'specially a go—they've got moss-rose on, look here. I wanted those."

She knew he wanted them for her.

"H'm!" she said, pleased. "They are pretty!"

"Shall you carry 'em, 'cause I'm frightened o' beautiful one?"

He was afraid of excitement now she had come, and he about the ground, showed her everything. Then, at the prospect, she explained the pictures, in a sort of story, in which he listened to it all around. He would not leave her. All the time he took care to her, talking with a small boy's pride of her. For no other woman looked with a lady as she did, in her little black bonnet and her dress. She smiled when she saw women she knew. When she was told she need to her son.

"Well, are you coming now, or later?"

"Are you gone? a'ready?" he asked, his face full of surprise.

"Already? It is past four, I know."

"What are you gone? a'ready for?" he demanded.

"You needn't come if you don't want," she said.

And she went slowly away with her little girl, whilst her son stood watching her, out to the house to let her go, and yet unable to leave the water. As she crossed the open ground in front of the house and then she heard men shouting, and smiled she too, and hurried a little, thinking her husband was probably in the bar.

At about half-past six her son came home, tired now, rather pale, and somewhat worried. He was miserable, though he did not know it, because he had let her go alone. Since she had gone, he had not enjoyed his water.

"Has my dad been?" he asked.

"No," said the mother.

"He's helping to wait at the Moon and Stars. I saw him through that black tin stuff w' he's in, on the window, w' his sleeves rolled up."

"Ha!" exclaimed the mother shortly. "He's got no money. An' he'll be satisfied if he gets his 'beverage, whether they give him more or not."

When the light was fading, and Mrs. Morel could see no more to see, she rose and went to the door. Everywhere was the sound

of sickness, the sickness of the holiday, that at last released her. She went out into the side garden. Women were coming home from the walks, the children dragging a white lamb with green legs, or a wooden horse. Occasionally a man lurching past, almost as tall as he could carry. Sometimes a good husband came along with his family, peacefully. But usually the women and children were alone. The stay-at-home mothers stood grouping at the corner of the alley, as the twilight sank, holding their arms round their white aprons.

Mrs. Morel was alone, but she was used to it. Her son and her little girl slept upstairs; so, it seemed, her home was there behind her, fixed and stable. But she felt watched with the coming child. The world seemed a dreary place, where nothing she would happen for her—at least until William grew up. But for herself, nothing but this dreary endurance—till the children grew up. And the children! She could not afford to have this third. She did not want it. The father was serving beer in a public-house, swelling himself drunk. She despised him, and was used to him. This coming child was too much for her. If it were not for William and Anne, she was sick of it, the struggle with poverty and ugliness and menaces.

She went into the front garden, finding too heavy to take herself out, yet unable to stay indoors. The heat suffocated her. And looking ahead, the prospect of her life made her feel as if she were buried alive.

The front garden was a small square with a privet hedge. There she stood, trying to soothe herself with the scent of flowers and the fading, beautiful evening. Opposite her small gate was the stile that led uphill, under the tall hedge, between the burning glow of the hot pastures. The sky overhead throbbled and pulsed with light. The glow sank quickly off the fields; the earth and the hedges smothered dark. As it grew dark, a ruddy glare came out on the hilltop, and out of the glare the diminished summation of the hills.

Sometimes, down the rough of darkness flamed by the path under the hedges, men came lurching home. One young man leaped into a gap down the steep hill that ended the hill, and went with a crash into the stile. Mrs. Morel shuddered. He picked himself up, twisting violently, rather pathetically, as if he thought the stile had wanted to hurt him.

She went indoors, wondering if things were never going to alter. She was beginning by now to realize that they would not. She seemed so far away from her girlhood, she wondered if it were the same person walking heavily up the back garden at the

Boatman as had run so lightly on the breakwater at Sheerness ten years before.

"What have I to do with him?" she said to herself. "What have I to do with all this? Here she stands I am going to have! It doesn't seem as if I were taken into account."

Sometimes life takes hold of one, carries the body along, accomplishes one's history, and yet is not real, but leaves oneself as it were flurried over.

"I was," Mrs. Mord said to herself—"I was, and what I was for can never come."

Then she straightened the dishes, lit the lamp, mended the fire, locked out the washing for the next day, and put it to soak. After which she sat down to her sewing. Through the long hours her needle flashed regularly through the stuff. Occasionally she sighed, needing to relieve herself. And all the time she was thinking how to make the most of what she had, for the children's sake.

At half-past eleven her husband came. His cheeks were very red and very shiny above his black eye marks. His head nodded slightly. He was pleased with himself.

"Oh! Oh! wunt' for me, ha?" P've bin 'olpic' Anthony, an' what's that he's got on? Never he's a busy bee 'n' none, an' that's my penny—"

"He thinks you've made the rest up in beer," she said shortly.

"An' I 'rove't—dat I 'rove't. You b'fence me, I've had very little this day, I have an' all." His voice went tender. "Here, an' I knowt this a bit of brandywine, an' a coconut for th' children." He laid the gingerbread and the coconut, a hairy sphere, on the table. "Nap, the other said thankyer for most o' day life, did we?"

As a compromise, she picked up the coconut and shook it, as one of us had my milk.

"It's a good 'un, you may back yer life o' that. I got it fra' Bill Hodgkinson. 'Bill,' I says, 'the men wants them three nuts, does we? Arise us for g'fain' me one for my bit of a lad an' wunt'.' 'I have, Walter, my lad,' 'e says; 'e's which an' 'em we's a wunt.' An' so I took one, an' thanked 'em. I didn't like to shake it afore 'e eyes, but 'e says, 'That'd better me's sure it's a good 'un, Wilt.' An' so, yer see, I knowed it was. He's a nice chap, is Bill Hodgkinson, 'e's a nice chap?"

"A man will put with anything so long as he's drunk, and you're drunk along with him," said Mrs. Mord.

"Oh, the wunt' little 'ow, who's drunk, I sh'd like ter know?" said Mord. He was extraordinarily pleased with himself, because of his day's helping to wait in the Moon and Stars. He chuckled on.

Mrs. Morel, very tired, and sick of his bubble, went to bed as quickly as possible, while he raised the fire.

Mrs. Morel came of a good old leather family, famous independent who had fought with Colonel Hutchinson, and who remained about Congregationalists. Her grandfather had given knighthood to the lace-merchant at a time when so many lace-manufacturers were ruined in Nottingham. Her father, George Coppard, was an engineer—a large, handsome, brawny man, proud of his fair skin and blue eyes, but more proud still of his integrity. Gertrude resembled her mother in her small build. But her temper, proud and unyielding, she had from the Coppards.

George Coppard was bitterly galled by his own poverty. He became foreman of the engineers in the dockyard at Sheerness. Mrs. Morel—Gertrude—was the second daughter. She favoured her mother, loved her mother best of all, but she had the Coppard's clear, defiant blue eyes and their broad nose. She remembered to have hated her father's overbearing manner towards her gentle, humorous, kindly-voiced mother. She remembered running over the breakwater at Sheerness and finding the boat. She remembered to have been proud and flattered by all the men when she had gone to the dockyard, for she was a delicate, rather proud child. She remembered the funny old mistress, whose assistant she had become, whom she had loved to help in the private school. And she still had the Bible that John Field had given her. She used to walk home from chapel with John Field when she was nineteen. He was the son of a well-to-do tradesman, had been to college in London, and was to devote himself to business.

She could always recall in detail a September Sunday afternoon, when they sat under the vine at the back of her father's house. The sun came through the elms in the vine-tarver and made beautiful patterns, like a lace scarf, falling on her and on him. Some of the leaves were almost yellow, like yellow fat cowers.

"How is it?" he had cried. "How your hair, I don't know what it is like! It's as bright as copper and gold, as red as burnt copper, and it has gold threads where the sun shines on it. Fancy their saying it's brown. Your mother calls it mouse-colour."

She had met his brilliant eyes, but her clear face entirely showed the station which came within her.

"But you say you don't like business," she pursued.

"I don't. I hate it!" he cried hotly.

"And you would like to go into the ministry," she had replied.

"I should. I should love it, if I thought I could make a first-rate preacher."

"Then why don't you—why don't you?" Her voice rang with defiance. "If I were a man, nothing would stop me."

She held her head erect. His was rather slant before her.

"But my father's so stiff-necked. He means to put me into the business, and I know he'll do it."

"But if you're a man?" she had cried.

"Being a man isn't everything," he replied, frowning with puzzled helplessness.

Now, as she moved about her work at the Bottoms, with some experience of what being a man meant, she knew that it was not everything.

At twenty, owing to her health, she had left Sherburne. Her father had retired home to Nottingham. John Field's father had been posted; the son had gone as a teacher to Norwood. She did not hear of him until, two years later, she made determined inquiry. He had married his landlady, a woman of forty, a widow with property.

And still Mrs. Morel preserved John Field's Bible. She did not now believe him to be——. Well, she understood pretty well what he might or might not have been. So she preserved his Bible, and kept his memory intact in her heart, for her own sake. To her dying day, for thirty-five years, she did not speak of him.

When she was twenty-three years old, she met, at a Christmas party, a young man from the Lewisham Valley. Morel was then twenty-seven years old. He was well set-up, stout, and very smart. He had wavy black hair that turned gray, and a vigorous black beard that had never been shaved. His cheeks were ruddy, and his red, moist mouth was noticeable because he laughed so often and so heartily. He had that one thing, a rich, ringing laugh. Gertrude Coppard had watched him, fascinated. He was so full of colour and animation, his voice ran so easily into some graveness, he was so ready and so pleasant with everybody. Her own father had a rich kind of humour, but it was satiric. The man's was different: soft, non-satirical, warm, a kind of good-nature.

She herself was opposite. She had a curious, responsive mind, which found much pleasure and amusement in listening to other folk. She was clever in leading folk on to talk. She loved ideas, and was considered very intellectual. What she liked most of all was an argument on religion or philosophy or politics with some educated man. This she did not often enjoy. So she always had people tell her about themselves, finding her pleasant so.

In her prison she was rather small and delicate, with a large brow, and drooping branches of brown silk curls. Her blue eyes were very straight, honest, and smacking. She had the beautiful

hands of the Coppards. Her dress was always subdued. She wore dark blue silk, with a peculiar silver chain of silver snailshells. This, and a heavy brooch of twisted gold, was her only ornaments. She was still perfectly intact, deeply religious, and full of beautiful goodness.

Walter Morel seemed excited every time he saw her. She was to the minor that sting of mystery and fascination, a lady. When she spoke to him, it was with a southern pronunciation and a purity of English which thrilled him to hear. She watched him. He danced well, as if it were natural and present in him to dance. His grandfather was a French refugee who had married an English baronet—*if it had been a marriage*. Gertrude Coppard watched the young man as he danced a certain subtle evaluation: *Not glamour in his movements, and his face the flower of her body, ruddy, with tumbled black hair, and laughing after whatever partner he loved above.* She thought him rather wonderful, never having met anyone like him. Her father was in her the type of all men. And George Coppard, proud in his bearing, handsome, and rather stern; who preferred theology in reading, and who drew near in sympathy only to one man, the Apostle Paul; who was harsh in government, and in familiarity kinder; who ignored all sensual pleasure—he was very different from the minor. Gertrude herself was rather contemptuous of dancing; she had not the slightest inclination towards that accomplishment, and had never learned even a *Roger de Coverley*. She was a puritan, like her father, high-minded, and really stern. Therefore the dusky, golden richness of this man's sensual flame of life, that flowed off his flesh like the flame from a candle, not baffled and gripped into unconsciousness by thought and spirit as her life was, seemed to her something wonderful, beyond her.

He came and bowed above her. A warmth radiated through her as if she had drunk wine.

"*Now do come and have the one we'nt me,*" he said recursively. "It's easy, you know. I'm pining to see you dance."

She had told him before she could not dance. She glanced at his humility and smiled. His smile was very beautiful. It moved the man so that he began everything.

"No, I won't dance," she said softly. Her words came clear and ringing.

Not knowing what he was doing—he often did the right thing by instinct—he sat beside her, looking reverentially.

"But you musn't make your dance," she rejoined.

"Nay, I don't want to dance that—if it's not you as I care about."

"Yet you looked me to it."



He laughed very heartily at this.

"I never thought of that. That's not long in taking the curl out of you."

It was her turn to laugh quietly.

"Now, don't look at it if you'll come much unattended," she said.

"I've like a pig's tail, I said because I can't help it," he laughed, rather boisterously.

"And you are a misest!" she exclaimed in surprise.

"Yes. I went down when I was ten."

She looked at him as wondering disease.

"When you were ten? And wasn't it very hard?" she asked.

"You soon get used to it. You live like th' mass, an' you pop out at night to see what's going on."

"It makes me feel blind," she frowned.

"Like a mouth-warper!" he laughed. "Yi, an' there's some things as does go round his mouth-warps." He thrust his face forward in the blind, snout-like way of a snail, seeming to sniff and pass the smell. "They does though!" he pronounced solemnly. "The river used such a way they got in. But the man in me ta's then down some time, an' she can see for signs."

She looked at him, startled. This was a new facet of life suddenly opened before her. She realized the life of the miners, hundreds of them toiling below earth and coming up at evening like snails to her sniffs. He tilted his life daily, and with gaiety. She looked at him, with a touch of appeal in her pure beauty.

"Shouldn't we like it?" he asked seriously. "Appears not, it 'ad dany then."

She had never been "dust'd" and "thou'd" before.

The next Christmas they were married, and for three months she was perfectly happy; for six months she was very happy.

He had signed the pledge, and wore the blue ribbon of a non-resister; he was nothing if not showy. They lived, she thought, in his own house. It was small, but convenient enough, and quite nicely furnished, with solid, worthy stuff that suited her honest soul. The women, her neighbours, were rather foreign to her, and Mabel's mother and sisters were apt to meet at her ladylike ways. But she could perfectly well live by herself, so long as she had her husband close.

Sometimes, when she herself worried of love-talk, she tried to open her heart seriously to him. She saw him listen deliberately, but without understanding. This killed her efforts at a finer intimacy, and she had dashes of fear. Sometimes he was careless of an evening; it was not enough for him just to be near her, she realized. She was glad when he set himself to little jobs.

He was a remarkably handy man—could make or mend anything. So she would say—

"I do like that coal-rake of your mother's—it is small and handy."

"Doesn't, my wench? Well, I made that, so I can make that sort."

"What? why, it's a steel one?"

"Ah! what if it be? The steel has got very similar, if not exactly same."

She did not mind the men, nor the hammering and noise. He was busy and happy.

But at the seventh month, when she was brushing her Sunday coat, she felt papers in the breast-pocket, and, seized with a sudden curiosity, took them out to read. He was surely wiser the longer he was married in; and it had not occurred to her before to feel pockets concerning the papers. They were the bills of the household furniture, still unpaid.

"Look here," she said at night, after he was washed and had had his dinner. "I found these in the pocket of your wedding-coat. Haven't you settled the bills yet?"

"No. I haven't had a chance."

"Has you told me all was paid. I had better go into Nottingham on Saturday and settle them. I don't like sitting on another man's chair and eating from an unpaid table."

He did not answer.

"I can have your book-book, can't I?"

"The one he's in, for what good it'll be to thee."

"I thought——" she began. He had told her he had a good bit of money left over. But she realised it was no use asking questions. She sat rigid with bitterness and indignation.

The next day she went down to see her mother.

"Didn't you buy the furniture for Walter?" she asked.

"Yes, I did," hardly answered the older woman.

"And how much did he give you to pay for it?"

The older woman was strong with fine indignation.

"Eighty pounds, if you're so keen on knowing," she replied.

"Eighty pounds! But there are forty-two pounds still owing!"

"I can't help that."

"But where has it all gone?"

"You'll find all the papers, I think, if you look—beside one pound as he owed me, and one pound as the wedding cost down here."

"Six pounds!" echoed Gertrude Morel. It seemed to her monstrous that, after her own father had paid so heavily for her

wedding, six pounds more should have been squandered in eating and drinking at Walter's parents' house, at his expense.

"And how much has he made in his house?" she asked.

"His house—what house?"

Gertrude blurted out white to the lips. He had told her the secret he is in of, and the next day, was he own.

"I thought the house we live in—" she began.

"They're my house, those two," said the mother-in-law.

"And not clear either. It's as much as I can do to keep the mortgage interest paid."

Gertrude sat white and silent. She was her father now.

"There we ought to be paying you rent," she said coldly.

"Walter is paying me rent," replied the mother.

"And what rent?" asked Gertrude.

"Six-and-six a week," returned the mother.

It was more than the house was worth. Gertrude held her head erect, looked straight before her.

"Is it lucky to be you," said the older woman, brightly, "to have a husband as takes all the worry of the money, and leaves you a free hand?"

The young wife was silent.

She said very little to her husband, but her manner had changed towards him. Something in her proud, honourable soul had crystallised out hard as rock.

When October came in, she thought only of Christmas. Two years ago, at Christmas, she had met him. Last Christmas she had married him. This Christmas she would bear him a child.

"You don't dance yourself, do you, ma'am?" asked her nearest neighbour, in October, when there was great talk of opening a dancing-club over the Brick and Tile Inn at Bowwood.

"No! I never had the least inclination to," Miss Mould replied.

"Funny! An' how funny as you should ha' married your Minister. You know he's quite a famous one for dancing."

"I didn't know he was famous," laughed Miss Mould.

"Yes, he is thought! Why, he ran that dancing-club in the Minister's Arms club-room for over five year."

"Did he?"

"Yes, he did." The other woman was defiant. "An' it was changed every Tuesday, and Thursday, an' Saturday—an' them was carry'n'-on, accordin' to all accounts!"

This kind of thing was gall and bitterness to Miss Mould, and she had a fair share of it. The women did not spare her, at first, for she was superior, though she could not help it.

He began to be rather late in coming home.

"They're working very late now, aren't they?" she said to her mother-in-law.

"No later than they always do, I don't think. But they stop to have their pint at Ellen's, an' they get talked, an' there you are! Dancer never said—an' it serves 'em right."

"But life, Maud, does not take any drink."

The woman dropped the clothes, looked at Miss Maud, then went on with her work, saying nothing.

Gertrude Morel was very ill when the boy was born. Maud was good to her, as good as gold. But she felt very lonely, miles away from her own people. She felt lonely with him now, and his presence only made it more intense.

The boy was small and frail at first, but he came on quickly. He was a beautiful child, with dark gold ringlets, and dark-blue eyes which changed gradually to a clear grey. His mother loved him passionately. He came just when her own bitterness at darkness was hardest to bear; when her faith in life was shaken, and her soul felt dreary and lonely. She made much of the child, and the father was jealous.

At last Mrs. Morel despised her husband. She turned to the child, she turned from the father. He had begun to neglect her, the novelty of his own latest was gone. He had no joy, she said bitterly to herself. What he felt just at the moment, that was all to him. He could not stand by anything. There was nothing at the back of all his show.

There began a battle between the husband and wife—a fearful, bloody battle that ended only with the death of one. She fought to make him undertake her own responsibilities, to make him fulfil his obligations. But he was too different from her. His nature was purely sensual, and she strove to make him moral, religious. She tried to force him to these things. He could not endure her; he drove her out of his mind.

While the baby was still tiny, the father's temper had become so unstable that it was not to be trusted. The child had only to give a little trouble when the man began to teethe. A little more, and the hard hands of the collier hit the baby. Then Mrs. Morel looked her husband, looked him the days, and he went out and drank, and she cured very little what he did. Only, on his return, she scolded him with her sister.

The management between them caused him, knowingly or unknowingly, greatly to offend her where he would not have done.

William was only one year old, and his mother was proud of him, he was so pretty. She was not well off now, but her sister

kept the boy in clothes. Then, with his little white hat curled with an ostrich feather, and his white coat, he was a joy to her, the evening wings of hair clustering round his head. Mrs. Nord lay hasting, one Sunday morning, in the chariot of the father and child doctors. Then she drove off. When she came downstairs, a great fire glowed in the grate, the room was hot, the breakfast was roughly laid, and seated in his armchair, against the chimney-piece, sat Nord, rather timid; and standing between his legs, the child-snapped like a sheep, with such an odd round poise—looking wondering at her; and on a newspaper spread out upon the hearthrug, a myriad of crimson-shaped robs, like the petals of a rose-gold scattered in the retreating firelight.

Mrs. Nord stood still. It was her first baby. She went very white, and was unable to speak.

"What don't think of me?" Nord laughed warmly.

She gripped her two fists, lifted them, and came forward. Nord shrunk back.

"I could kill you, I could!" she said. She choked with rage, her two fists uplifted.

"You can want to make a wrench on 'em," Nord said, in a frightened tone, bending his head to shield his eyes from her. His attempt at laughter had vanished.

The mother looked down at the jagged, close-clipped head of her child. She put her hands on his hair, and stroked and fondled his head.

"Oh—my boy!" she faltered. Her lip trembled, her face broke, and, stretching up the child, she buried her face in his shoulder and wept painfully. She was one of those women who cannot cry; whom it hurts as it hurts a man. It was like ripping something out of her, her sobbing.

Nord sat with his elbows on his knees, his hands gripped together till the knuckles were white. He gazed at the fire, feeling almost ashamed, as if he could not breathe.

Presently she came to an end, smoothed the child and cleared away the breakfast-table. She left the newspaper, lay down with curls, spread upon the hearthrug. At last her husband gathered it up and put it at the back of the fire. She went about her work with closed mouth and very quiet. Nord was subdued. He crept about wretchedly, and his eyes were a misery than dry. She spoke to him civilly, and never alluded to what he had done. But he felt something final had happened.

Afterwards she told she had been silly, that the boy's hair would have had to be cut, sooner or later. In the end, she even brought herself to say to her husband it was just as well he had played

harsher when he did. But she knew, and Mord knew, that that act had caused something momentous to take place in her soul. She remembered the scene all her life, as one in which she had suffered the most intensely.

This act of maternal chastisement was the spear through the side of her love for Mord. Before, while she had wrings against him bitterly, she had forced other men, as if he had gone away from her. Now she ceased to fight for his love; he was an outsider to her. This quiet life much more bearable.

Nevertheless, she still continued to strive with him. She still had her high moral sense, inherited from generations of Puritans. It was now a religious instinct, and she was almost a fanatic with him, because she loved him, or had loved him. If he sinned, she tortured him. If he drank, and lied, was often a poltroon, sometimes a knave, she waited the hour unmercifully.

The pity was, she was too much his opponent. She could not be content with the little he might be; she would have him the much that he ought to be. So, in seeking to make him nobler than he could be, she damaged him. She squared and brist and scoured herself, but she lost some of her worth. She also had the children.

He drank rather heavily, though not more than many miners, and always been, so that while his health was affected, it was never injured. The week-end was his chief excuse. He sat in the miners' Arms and swung-out there every Friday, every Saturday, and every Sunday evening. On Monday and Tuesday he had to get up and reluctantly leave towards ten o'clock. Sometimes he stayed at home on Wednesday and Thursday evenings, as was only out for an hour. He practically never had to earn work owing to his drinking.

But although he was very ready at work, his wages fell off. He was half-muddled, a tongue-wagger. Authority was hateful to him, therefore he could only abuse the go-managers. He would try, in the Palmerston:

"The gaffer come down to our staff this morning, an' 'e says, 'You know, Walter, that 'ere'll not do. What about these props?' An' I says to him, 'Willy, what are 'ollers' about? What d'ye mean about de' props?' 'It'll never do, this 'ere,' 'e says. 'You'll be 'orner' de' roof in, one o' these days.' An' I says, 'That'd better start on a bit o' drink, there, an' hold it up w' thy 'ead.' So 'e sees that need, 'e comes an' 'e swears, an' 'e othes 'olaps they did laugh." Mord was a good mimic. He imitated the manager's fat, squaky voice, with his attempt at good English.

"'I shan't have it, Walter. Who knows more about it, me or

"you?" So I says, "I've never bin out here much that' knowen, Alfred. It'll 'gappen carry thee ter bed an' back." "

So Alfred would go on to the amusement of his beer-companions. And some of this would be true. The gin-monger was not an educated man. He had been a boy along with Alfred, so that, while the two differed each other, they more or less took each other for granted. But Alfred Chatterworth did not forgive the louty these public-house sayings. Consequently, although Alfred was a good runner, sometimes earning as much as five pounds a week when he married, he came gradually to have worse and worse calls, when the coal was thin, and hard to get, and unprofitable.

Also, in winter, the gins are slack. Often, on bright sunny mornings, the men return trooping home again at ten, eleven, or twelve o'clock. No empty tanks stand at the gin-mouth. The women on the hillside look across as they shake the laundrying against the lines, and count the waggon the engine is taking along the line up the valley. And the children, as they come from school at dinner-time, looking down the dale and seeing the wheels on the headworks standing, say—

"Milkton's knocked off! My dad'll be at home."

And there is a rest of shadow over all, women and children and man, because money will be short at the end of the week.

Alfred was supposed to give his wife thirty shillings a week, to provide everything—rent, food, clothes, date, kummers, doctors. Occasionally, if he were flush, he gave her thirty-five. But these occasions by no means balanced those when he gave her twenty-five. In winter, with a decent wind, the money might stop fifty or fifty-five shillings a week. Then he was happy. On Friday night, Saturday, and Sunday, he spent royally, going out of his coverings or showabouts. And out of so much, he scarcely spared the children as tarts, penny or bought them a pound of apples. It all went in drink. In the bad times, matters were more worrying, but he was not so often drunk, so that him, Alfred, used to say—

"I'm not sure I wouldn't rather be short, for when he's flush, there isn't a minute of peace."

If he earned thirty shillings he kept ten; from thirty-five he kept five, from thirty-two he kept three; from twenty-eight he kept three; from twenty-four he kept two; from twenty he kept one-and-six; from eighteen he kept a shilling; from sixteen he kept sixpence. He never saved a penny, and he gave his wife no opportunity of saving; indeed, she had occasionally to pay his debts; not public-house debts, for those never were passed on to the women, but debts when he had bought a cask, or a fancy walking-stick.

At the waking time, Mabel was working busily, and Mrs. Mabel was trying to ease against her confinement. So it galled her bitterly to think to docket herself taking his pleasure and spending money, whilst she remained at home, hampered. There were two days holiday. On the Tuesday morning Mabel rose early. He was in good spirits. Quite well, before she awoke, she heard him whistling away to himself downstairs. He had a pleasant way of whistling, freely and musical. He nearly always whistled hymns. He had been a choir-boy with a beautiful voice, and had taken solos in Southwell Cathedral. His morning whistling alone betrayed it.

His wife lay listening to him, tinkering away in the garden, his whistling ringing out to be noted and harmonised away. It always gave her a sense of warmth and peace to hear him thus as she lay in bed, the children not yet awake, in the bright early morning, happy in his man's labours.

At nine o'clock, while the children with bare legs and feet were sitting playing on the sofa, and the mother was washing up, he came in from his carpentry, his sleeves rolled up, his waistcoat hanging open. He was still a good-looking man, with black, wavy hair, and a large black moustache. His face was perhaps a trifle inflamed, and there was about him a look almost of perviousness. But now he was jolly. He went straight to the sink where his wife was washing up.

"What are these there?" he said solemnly. "Shut off an' let me wash them."

"You may wait till I've finished," said his wife.

"Oh, now? An' what if I choose?"

This good-humoured thence around Mrs. Mabel.

"Then you can go and wash yourself in the soft-water tub."

"He! I can an' a', the masterly little 'wery."

With which he stood watching her a moment, then went away to wait for her.

When he chose he could well make himself again a real gallant. Usually he preferred to go out with a scarf round his neck. Now, however, he made a toilet. There seemed so much gusto in the way he pulled and pulled as he washed himself, so much sincerity with which he hurried to the mirror in the kitchen, and, bending because it was too low for him, scrupulously parted his wet black hair, that it irritated Mrs. Mabel. He put on a turn-down collar, a black bow, and wore his Sunday tail-coat. As such, he looked agreeable, and what his clothes would not do, his attitude for making the most of his good looks would.

At half-past nine Jerry Purdy came to call for his pal. Jerry



was Mord's bosom friend, and Mrs. Mord disliked him. He was a tall, thin man, with a rather fiery face, the kind of face that comes in lack of sympathy. He walked with a stiff, brackish gait, as if his head were on a wooden spring. His nature was cold and shrewd. Generous where he intended to be generous, he seemed to be very fond of himself, and more or less to take charge of him.

Mrs. Mord hated him. She had known his wife, who had died of consumption, and who had, at the end, recovered such a violent dislike of her husband, that if he came into her room it caused her hemorrhages. None of which Jerry had seemed to mind. And now his eldest daughter, a girl of fifteen, kept a poor house for him, and looked after the two younger children.

"A mean, wizen-haired rascal!" Mrs. Mord said of him.

"I've never known Jerry mean in my life," protested Alfred.

"A spiteful-minded and never liver cheap you couldn't find anywhere, according to my knowledge."

"Open-handed to you," asserted Mrs. Mord. "But he has a shut tight enough to his children, poor things."

"Poor things! And what for are they poor things, I should like to know."

But Mrs. Mord would not be appeased on Jerry's score.

The subject of argument was won, crossing his thin neck over the solitary curtain. He caught him. Mord's eye

"Mordie!, mardie! Mister is!"

"Yas—ha ha!"

Jerry entered unaided, and stood by the kitchen doorway. He was not invited to sit down but stood there, coolly asserting the rights of men and husbands.

"A nice day," he said to Mrs. Mord.

"Yas."

"Grand out this morning—grand for a walk."

"Do you mean you're going for a walk?" she asked.

"Yas. We mean walkin' to Nottingham," he replied.

"Hys!"

The two men greeted each other, both glad. Jerry, however, full of assurance, Mord rather subdued, afraid to seem too jocular in presence of his wife. But he lost his beam quickly, with spirit. They were going for a ten-mile walk across the fields to Nottingham. Climbing the hillsides from the Bottoms, they ascended gaily into the morning. At the Moon and Sun they had their first drink, then on to the Old Spot. There a long dry ride of drought is every three into Bulwell to a glorious pint of beer. For they stopped in a field with some haymakers whose gallsen bottle was full, so that, when they came in sight of the city, Mord was thirsty.

The men spread up-south below them, smoking vaguely in the smoking glass, sweeping the crop away to the south with spirit and factory bells and chimneys. In the low field Moral lay down under an ash-tree and slept soundly for over an hour. When he rose to go forward he felt queer.

The two had dinner in the Meadows, with Jerry's sister, then repaired to the Punch Bowl, where they joined in the excitement of pigeon-racing. Moral never in his life played cards, considering them as having some occult, malevolent power—"the devil's pictures," he called them! But he was a master of dice and of dominoes. He took a challenge from a Frenchman, on chance. All the men in the old, long bar took sides, betting either one way or the other. Moral took off his coat. Jerry held the bar, commanding the scores. The men at the tables watched. Some stood with their snags in their hands. Moral felt his big wooden ball carefully, then launched it. He played havoc among the dominoes, and won half a crown, which entered him to solvency.

By seven o'clock the two were in good condition. They caught the 7.30 train home.

In the afternoon the Betting was intolerable. Every inhabitant remaining was out of doors. The women, in rows and threes, bathed and in white aprons, pumped in the alley between the blocks. Men, having a rest between drinking out on their heels and called. The place smelled stale; the slate roofs glared in the mid heat.

Mr. Moral took the little girl down to the brook in the meadows, which were not more than two hundred yards away. The water ran quickly over stones and broken pebbles. Mother and child leaned on the rail of the old sheep-bridge, watching. Up at the dipping-hole, at the other end of the meadows, Mrs. Moral could see the naked forms of boys flailing round the deep yellow water, or an occasional bright figure dart glancing over the blackest stagnant meadow. She knew William was at the dipping-hole, and it was the dread of her life lest he should get drowned. Annie played under the tall old hedge, picking up elder-crowns, that she called currants. The child required much attention, and the fire were tiring.

The children were put to bed at seven o'clock. Then she worked awhile.

When Walter Moral and Jerry arrived at Battersea they felt a heat off their minds; a railway journey no longer imposed, so they could put the finishing touches to a glorious day. They entered the Nelson with the satisfaction of returned travellers.

The next day was a week-day, and the thought of it put a

danger to the men's spirits. Most of them, moreover, had spent their money. Some were already rolling drowsily home, to sleep in preparation for the sunrise. Mrs. Morel, listening to their mournful singing, went indoors. Nine o'clock passed, and ten, and still "the pair" had not returned. On a doorstep somewhere a man was singing loudly, in a drowsy, "Lord, kindly Light." Mrs. Morel was always indignant with the drunken men that they must sing that hymn when they got miserable.

"As if 'Gentleness' weren't good enough," she said.

The kitchen was full of the aroma of baked beer and hops. On the hob a huge black maccospan steamed slowly. Mrs. Morel took a panhandle, a great bowl of thick and earth, smeared a heap of white sugar into the beer-cup, and then, striking herself to the weight, was pouring in the liquor.

Just then Morel came in. He had been very jolly in the Hibernian, but coming home had grown irritable. He had not quite got over the feeling of irrepressible and pain, after having slept on the ground when he was so hot; and a bad conscience afflicted him as he entered the house. He did not know he was angry. But when the garden-gate refused him attempts to open it, he locked it and broke the latch. He entered just as Mrs. Morel was pouring the infusion of herbs out of the maccospan. Swaying slightly, he lurched against the table. The boiling liquor pitched. Mrs. Morel started back.

"Good gracious," she cried, "coming home in his drunkenness!"

"Come! home in his what?" he snarled, his hat over his eye. Suddenly her blood rose at a jet.

"Say you're not drunk!" she fluted.

She had put down her maccospan, and was stirring the sugar into the beer. He dropped his two hands heavily on the table, and drove his face forward at her.

"Say you're not drunk," he repeated. "Willy, nobody but a nasty little bitch like you 'ud 'ave much o' thoughts."

He drove his face forward at her.

"There's money to break with, if there's money for nothing else."

"I've not spent a twopenny for this day," he said.

"You don't get so drunk as a lord on nothing," she replied.

"And," she cried, flushing once more in fury, "if you've been sponging on your beloved Jerry, why, let him look after his children, for they need it."

"It's a lie, it's a lie. Shut your face, woman."

They were now at hand-to-hand. Each forgot everything save

the hatred of each other and the battle between them. She was fiery and furious as he. They went on till he called her a liar.

"No," she cried, starting up, unable to breathe. "Don't call me that—you, the most despicable liar that ever walked in civilization!" She forced the last words out of suffocated lungs.

"You're a liar!" he yelled, waving the table with his fist. "You're a liar, you're a liar."

She suffered herself, with clenched fist.

"The house is filthy with you," she cried.

"Then get out on it—it's mine. Get out on it!" he shouted. "It's not as though it's never yours, not then. It's my house, not mine. Then get out on't—get out on't!"

"And I would," she cried, suddenly clutching into tears of impotence. "Ah, wouldn't I, wouldn't I have gone long ago, but for these children. Ay, haven't I expected not going years ago, when I'd only the one"—suddenly dying into rage. "Do you think it's for you I stop—do you think I'd stop one minute for me?"

"Go, then," he shouted, beside himself. "Go!"

"No!" she heard aloud. "No," she cried loudly, "you don't have it all your own way; you don't do all you like. I've got these children to see to. My word," she laughed, "I should look well to leave them to you."

"Go," he cried thickly, lifting his fist. He was afraid of her. "Go!"

"I should be only too glad. I should laugh, laugh, my lord, if I could get away from you," she replied.

He came up to her, his red face, with its bloodshot eyes, staring forward, and gripped her arm. She cried in fear of him, struggled to be free. Clinging tightly to himself, panting, he pushed her roughly to the outer door, and thrust her forth, closing the bolt behind her with a bang. Then he went back into the kitchen, dropped over his armchair, his head, bursting full of blood, falling between his knees. Thus he dipped gradually into a stupor, from confusion and intoxication.

The moon was high and magnificent in the August night. Mrs. Morel, stirred with passion, determined to find herself out there in a great white light, that fell cold on her, and gave a shock to her confused mind. She stood for a few moments helplessly staring at the gleaming great rhododendron leaves near the door. Then she got the air into her breast. She walked down the garden path, trembling in every limb, while the child trailed with her. For a while she could not control her consciousness; mechanically she

went over the hot sand, then over it again, certain phrases, certain moments coming each time like a brand red-hot down on her soul, and each time she started again the next hour, each time the brand came down at the same colour, all the mark was burnt in, and the pain burnt out, and at last she came to herself. She must have been half an hour in the delirious condition. Then the presence of the night came again to her. She glanced round to find. She had wandered to the side garden, where she was walking up and down the path beside the dwarf hedges under the long wall. The garden was a narrow strip, bounded from the road, that ran incessantly between the blocks, by a thick thorn hedge.

She hurried out of the side garden to the front, where she could stand as if in an immense gulf of white light, the moon streaming high in face of her, the moonlight streaming up from the hills in front, and filling the valley where the flowers croaked, almost blindingly. There, panting and half weeping in reaction from the stress, she murmured to herself over and over again, "The answer! the answer!"

She became aware of something about her. With an effort she turned here] to see what it was that possessed her consciousness. The tall white hills were rising in the moonlight, and the air was charged with their perfume, as with a presence. Mrs. Marris gasped slightly in fear. She touched the fog, pulled flowers to their petals, then drooped. They seemed to be moonlight in the moonlight. She put her hand into one white hill: the gold secretly showed in her fingers by moonlight. She bent down to look at the bed of yellow poppies; but it only appeared dusky. Then she drew a deep draught of the coast. It almost made her dizzy.

Mrs. Marris leaned on the garden gate, looking out, and she lost herself awhile. She did not know what she thought. Except for a slight feeling of sadness, and her consciousness in the child, herself melted out like steam into the shiny, pale air. After a time the child, too, melted with her in the evening-pot of moonlight, and she rested with the hills and hills and houses, all rears together in a kind of union.

When she came to herself she was tired for sleep. Languidly she looked about her; she thought of white hills seemed like bushes spread with leaves; a moth moonbeamed over them, and right across the garden. Following it with her eye raised her. A few whiffs of the air, strong scent of phlox, incited her. She passed along the path, humming at the white rose-bush. It needed sweet and simple. She touched the white ruffles of the rose. Their fresh scent and cool, soft leaves reminded her of the morning-time and

sunshine. She was very kind of them. But she was tired, and wanted to sleep. In the mysterious out-of-doors she felt forlorn.

There was no sound anywhere. Evidently the children had not been awakened, or had gone to sleep again. A trile, three miles away, rumbled across the valley. The night was very large, and very change, stretching its heavy distances infinitely. And out of the silver-grey fog of darkness came sounds vague and hoarse: a concrete not far off, sound of a train like a sigh, and distant shouts of men.

Her quivering heart beginning to beat quickly again, she hurried down the side garden to the back of the house. Softly she lifted the latch, the door was still locked, then hard against her. She rapped gently, waited, then rapped again. She must see what the children, or the neighbours. He must be asleep, and he would not wake easily. Her heart began to beat to be indoors. She rang to the door-handle. How it was cold; she would take a shill, and in her private consolation.

Placing her spoon over her head and her arms, she hurried again to the side garden, to the window of the kitchen. Leaning on the sill, she could just see, under the blind, her husband's arms spread out on the table, and his black head on the board. He was sleeping with his face lying on the table. Something in his attitude made her feel kind of change. The lamp was burning steadily; she could tell by the copper colour of the light. She tapped at the window frame and more softly. Almost it seemed as if the glass would break. Still he did not wake up.

After vain efforts, she began to drive, partly from contact with the stone, and from exhaustion. Fearful always for the unborn child, she wondered what she could do for warmth. She went down to the workhouse, where was an old hearthstone she had earned out for the rag-woman the day before. Thus she wrapped over her shoulders. It was warm, if grimy. Then she walked up and down the garden path, peeping every now and then under the blind, knocking, and telling herself that in the end the very strain of her position must wake him.

At last, after about an hour, she rapped long and low at the window. Gradually the sound penetrated to him. When, in despair, she had ceased to rap, she saw him rise, then lift his face blindly. The labouring of his heart hurt him into consciousness. She rapped imperatively at the window. He started awake. Instantly she saw his face set and his eyes glare. He had not a grain of physical fear. If it had been twenty bargains, he would have gone blindly for them. He glanced round, bewildered, but prepared to fight.

"Open the door, Walter," she said softly.

His hands relaxed. It dawned on him what he had done. His head dropped, motion and stopped. She saw him hurry to the door, heard the bolt click. He tried the lock. It opened—and there stood the silver-gray night, fearful to him, after the sunny light of the lamp. He hurried back.

When Miss Mabel entered, she saw him almost running through the door to the stairs. He had ripped his collar off his neck so his hands so he gave her that came on, and there it lay with broken buttonholes. It made her angry.

She warmed and soothed herself. In her weakness forgetting everything, she moved about at the little tasks that remained to be done, set his breakfast, moved his pit-boots, put his pit-clothes on the hearth to warm, set his pit-boots beside them, put him out a clean scarf and snap-tag and two apples, raised the fire, and went to bed. He was already dead asleep. His narrow black eyebrows were drawn up in a sort of painful anxiety into his forehead, while his cheeks' down-turned, and his sulky mouth, seemed to be saying: "I don't care who you are nor what you are, I shall have my own way."

Miss Mabel knew him too well to look at him. As she unfolded her blanket at the mirror, she looked faintly to see her face all smeared with yellow dust of kites. She brushed it off, and at last lay down. For some time her mind continued snapping and jerking sparks, but she was asleep before her husband stole from the first sleep of his dreamless.

*The Birth of Paul, and another Battle*

AFTER such a scene as the last, Walter Morel was for some days ashamed and ashamed, but he soon regained his old bullying indifference. Yet there was a slight shivering, a doubting in his assurance. Physically even, he slumped, and his fine full presence waned. His nose grew to the least touch, so that, as he sank from his erect, assertive bearing, his physiognomy seemed to contract along with his pride and moral strength.

But now he realised how hard it was for his wife to drag about at her work, and, his sympathy quickened by pity, he hurried forward with his help. He came straight home from the pit, and stayed in at evening till Friday, and then he could not remain at home. But he was kept again by legs of flesh, almost quite sober.

He always made his own breakfast. Being a man who rose early and had plenty of time he did not, as some men do, drag his wife out of bed at six o'clock. At five, sometimes earlier, he woke, got straight out of bed, and went downstairs. When she could not sleep, his wife lay waiting like this time, as for a period of peace. The only real rest seemed to be when he was out of the house.

He went downstairs in his shirt and then struggled into his post-mortem, which were left on the hearth to warm all night. There was always a fire, because Mrs. Morel liked it. And the first sound in the house was the bang, bang of the poker against the grate, as Morel tumbled the remainder of the coal to make the fire, which was filled and left on the hob, steadily bed. His cup and knife and fork, all he wanted except just the food, was laid ready on the table on a newspaper. Then he got his breakfast, made the tea, pushed the bottom of the door with his foot to shut out the draught, piled a big fire, and sat down to an hour of joy. He opened his ham on a fork and caught the drops of fat on his hand; then he put the rest on his dish dust of bread, and cut off chunks with a sharp knife, poured his tea into his tin cup, and was happy. With his family about, meals were never so pleasant. He finished a fork; it is a modern introduction which the rich scarcely reached common people. What Morel preferred was a chop-knife. Then, in solitude, he ate and drank, often sitting, in



cold weather, sit a while stout with his back to the warm chimney-pot, his feet on the fender, his cup on the hearth. And then he read the last night's newspaper—what of it he could—spelling it over laboriously. He preferred to keep the blinds down and the candle lit even when it was daylight; it was the habit of the man.

At a quarter to six he rose, cut two thick slices of bread and butter, and put them in the white canvas snap-bag. He filled his tin bottle with tea. Cold tea without milk or sugar was the drink he preferred for the pot. Then he pulled off his shirt, and put on his pinstripes, a vest of thick flannel cut low round the neck, and with short sleeves like a chemise.

Then he went upstairs to his wife with a cup of tea because she was ill, and because it occurred to him.

"I've brought thee a cup-o' tea, lass," he said.

"Thank you much, but you know I don't like it," she replied.

"Drink it up; it'll pop thee off to sleep again."

She accepted the tea. It pleased him to see her take it and sip it.

"I'll back my life there's no sugar in," she said.

"Yis—thee's one leg on," he replied, injured.

"It's a wonder," she said, sipping again.

She had a woman's face when her hair was loose. He loved her to grumble at him in this manner. He looked at her again, and went, without any sign of leave-taking. He never took more than two slices of bread and butter or one in the pot, or an apple or an orange was a treat to him. He always liked it when she put one out for him. He tied a scarf round his neck, put on his great, hairy boots, his coat, with the leg pockets, that carried his snap-bag and his bottle of tea, and went forth into the fresh morning air, closing, without looking, the door behind him. He loved the early morning, and the walk across the fields. So he appeared at the pick-up, often with a stroll from the hedge between his teeth, which he showed all day to keep his mouth moist, down the main, feeling quite as happy as when he was in the field.

Later, when the time for the baby grew nearer, he would hustle round in his slovenly fashion, poking out the tubes, rubbing the fireplace, sweeping the hearth before he went to work. Then, feeling self-righteous, he went upstairs.

"Now I've cleared up for thee; that's no 'cusion ter me a peg all day, but we had read thy books."

Which made her laugh, in spite of her indignation.

"And the dinner cooks well?" she answered.

"Oh, I know next about it; dinner."

"You'd know if there weren't any?"

"Ay, 'appen so," he answered, departing.

When she got downstairs, she would find the house tidy, but dirty. She could not rest until she had thoroughly cleaned, so she went down to the sub-plot with her dust pan. Mrs. Kirk, seeing her, would contrive to have to go to her own workplace at that moment. Then, across the wooden fence, she would call:

"So you keep sweeping on, then?"

"Ay," answered Mrs. Mabel deprecatingly. "There's nothing else for it."

"Have you seen Floss?" called a very small woman from across the road. It was Mrs. Anthony, a black-haired, strange little body, who always wore a brown velvet dress, tight fitting.

"I haven't," said Mrs. Mabel.

"Oh, I wish he'd come. I've got a copperful of clothes, and I've sewn I sewed his belt."

"Hark! He's at the end."

The two women looked down the alley. At the end of the footway a man stood in a sort of old-fashioned trap, handling one bundle of ornamented stuff, while a cluster of women held up their arms to him, some with bundles. Mrs. Anthony herself had a heap of creamy, undyed stockings hanging over her arm.

"I've done ten dozen this week," she said proudly to Mrs. Mabel.

"True?" went the other. "I don't know how you can find time."

"Oh!" said Mrs. Anthony. "You can find time if you make time."

"I don't know how you do it," said Mrs. Mabel. "And how much shall you get for these more?"

"Tuppence-ha'penny a dozen," replied the other.

"Well," said Mrs. Mabel, "I'd scarce before I'd sit down and sew twenty-four stockings for tuppence ha'penny."

"Oh, I don't know," said Mrs. Anthony. "You can rip along with 'em."

Rice was coming along, ringing his bell. Women were waiting at the yard-ends with their stained stockings hanging over their arms. The man, a common fellow, made paces with them, tried to refold them, and balled them. Mrs. Mabel went up her yard gratefully.

It was an understood thing that if one woman wanted her neighbour, she should put the poker in the fire and bang at the back of the fireplace, which, as the fire went back to back, would make a great noise in the adjoining house. One morning Mrs. Kirk, mixing a pudding, nearly started out of her vision as she heard the thud, thud, in her grate. With her hands all floury, she rushed to the door.

"Did you knock, Mrs. Mabel?"

"If you wouldn't mind, Mrs. Kirk."

Mrs. Kirk climbed on to her copper, got over the wall on to Mrs. Moor's copper, and ran in to her neighbour.

"Oh, dear, how are you feeling?" she cried in concern.

"You might ask Mrs. Bower," said Mrs. Moor.

Mrs. Kirk went into the yard, hid up her sewing, shrill voice, and called:

"Ag-gye—Ag-gye!"

The town was boxed from one end of the Bottoms to the other as last Aggie came crawling up, and was sent for Mrs. Bower, while Mrs. Kirk left her pudding and stayed with her neighbour.

Mrs. Moor went to bed. Mrs. Kirk had Annie and William for dinner. Mrs. Bower, fat and wedding, boxed the house.

"Hash some cold meat up for the master's dinner, and make him an apple-cake or pudding," said Mrs. Moor.

"He may go without pudding this day," said Mrs. Bower.

Moor was not as a rule one of the first to appear at the bottom of the pit, ready to come up. Some men were there before four o'clock, when the whistle blew home all; but Moor, whose stall, a poor one, was at this time about a mile and a half away from the bottom, worked usually till the first mate stopped, then he finished also. This day, however, the master was sick of the work. At two o'clock he looked at his watch, by the light of the green candle—he was in a talk working—and again at half-past two. He was having at a piece of rock that was in the way for the next day's work. As he sat on his back, or knotted, giving hard blows with his pick, "Ugh—ugh!" he went.

"Shall we finish, Borry?" cried Barker, his fellow butty.

"Finish? Never while the world stands!" growled Moor.

And he went on striking. He was tired.

"It's a heart-breaking job," said Barker.

But Moor was too overpowered, at the end of his tether, to answer. Still he struck and hacked with all his might.

"The night as well leave us, Walter," said Barker. "It'll do to-morrow, without that broken' thy gun out."

"I'll lay no to-morrow finger on the to-morrow, he'd!" cried Moor.

"Oh, well, if the woman, somebody else 'll be 's to," said Barker.

Then Moor continued to strike.

"Hie up there—hew-a!" cried the men, leaving the next stall.

Moor continued to strike.

"The'll be upon quick me up," said Barker, departing.

\* "Borry" is a common form of address. It is, perhaps, a corruption of "wreck."

When he had gone, Moral left alone, his savings. He had not finished his job. He had overworked himself was a heavy. Sitting, wet with sweat, he threw his tool down, pulled on his coat, blew out his candle, took his lamp, and went. Down the main road the lights of the other men were twinkling. There was a hollow sound of many voices. It was a long, heavy tramp underground.

He sat on the bottom of the pit, where the great drops of water fell splash. Many others were waiting their turn to go up, talking noisily. Moral gave his nervous short and disagreeable.

"It's a matter, Sorry," said old Giles, who had had the news from the top.

Moral found one comfort. He had his old umbrella, which he kept in the lamp cabin. At last he took his mind on the chair, and was at the top in a moment. Then he headed in his lamp and got his umbrella, which he had brought as an action for insurance. He stood on the edge of the pit bank for a moment, looking out over the field; grey rain was falling. The trucks stood full of wet, bright coal. Water ran down the sides of the waggons, over the walls "Q. W. and Co." Cottons, making indifference to the men, were streaming down the line and up the field, a grey, dismal flow. Moral put up his umbrella, and took pleasure from the pattering of the drops thence.

All along the road to Bedford the miners tramped, wet and grey and dirty, but their red scarves talking with animation. Moral also walked with a gang, but he said nothing. He frowned peacefully as he went. Many men passed into the France of Wales or into Eileen's. Moral, feeling sufficiently disagreeable to most companies, tramped along under the drooping cross that overhangs the path wall, and down the road of Greenfield Lane.

Mr. Moral lay in bed, listening to the rain, and the feet of the miners from Minson, their voices, and the bang, bang of the guns as they went through the stile up the field.

"There's some herb here behind the pantry-door," she said. "It's a matter 'I want a drink, if he doesn't stop."

But he was late, make concluded he had called for a drink, since it was raining. What did he care about the child or her?

She was very ill when her children were born.

"What is it?" she asked, feeling not so death.

"A boy."

And she took consolation in that. The thought of being the mother of men was warbling in her heart. She looked at the child. It had blue eyes, and a lot of fair hair, and was bonny. Her love came up hot, in spite of everything. She had it in her hand with her.

Moral, thinking nothing, dragged his way up the garden path,

wearily and angrily. He closed his umbrella, and stowed it in the trunk; then he抖抖ed his heavy boots into the kitchen. Mrs. Bower appeared in the inner doorway.

"Well," she said, "she's about as bad as she can be. It's a lousy child."

The miner grunted, put his empty soup-bag and his tin boots on the dresser, went back into the hallway and hung up his coat, then came and dropped into his chair.

"Hau ver got a drink?" he asked.

The woman went into the pantry. There was heard the pop of a cork. She set the mug, with a little disparted nap, on the table before him. He drank, gasped, wiped his big mustache on the end of his scarf, drank, gasped, and lay back in his chair. The woman would not speak to him again. She set his dinner before him, and went upstairs.

"Was that the supper?" asked Mrs. Morel.

"I've gave him his dinner," replied Mrs. Bower.

After he had sat with his arms on the table—he rejected the fact that Mrs. Bower put no cloth on for him, and gave him a little plate, instead of a full-sized dinner-plate—he began to eat. The fact that his wife was ill, that he had another boy, was nothing to him at that moment. He was too tired; he wanted his dinner; he wanted to sit with his arms lying on the board; he did not like having Mrs. Bower about. The fire was too small to please him.

After he had finished his meal, he sat for twenty minutes; then he soaked up a big fire. Then, in his unchanged feet, he went reluctantly upstairs. It was a struggle to face his wife at this moment, and he was tired. His face was black, and creased with sweat. His clothes had dried again, making the dirt lo. He had a dirty woollen scarf round his throat. So he stood at the foot of the bed.

"Well, how are you, then?" he asked.

"I'll be all right," she answered.

"Hm!"

He stood at a loss what to say next. He was tired, and this bother was rather a nuisance to him, and he didn't quite know where he was.

"A lad, the boys," he murmured.

She turned down the sheet and showed the child.

"Ehse him!" he murmured. Which made her laugh, because he blushed by mere-posturing paternal emotion, which he did not feel just then.

"Go now," she said.

"I will, my son," he answered, turning away.

Dismissed, he returned to his bar, but he dared not. She had wanted him to kiss her, but could not bring himself to give any sign. She only breathed freely when he was gone out of the room again, leaving behind him a faint smell of powder.

Mrs. Mord had a visit every day from the Congregational clergyman, Mr. Hester was young, and very poor. His wife had died at the birth of his first baby, so he remained alone in the world. He was a Bachelor of Arts of Cambridge, very shy and no preacher. Mrs. Mord was fond of him, and he depended on her. For hours he talked to her, when she was well. He became the god-parent of the child.

Occasionally the minister stayed to tea with Mrs. Mord. Then she laid the cloth early, got out her best cups, with a little green rim, and hoped Mord would not come too soon; indeed, if he stayed for a pint, she would not mind this day. She had always two dinners to cook, because she believed children should have their share meal at midday, whereas Mord needed her at five o'clock. So Mr. Hester would hold the baby, whilst Mrs. Mord beat up a butter-pudding or peeled the potatoes, and he, watching her all the time, would discuss the new sermons. His ideas were quaint and fantastic. She brought him judiciously to earth. It was a discussion of the wedding at Cana.

"When He changed the water into wine at Cana," he read, "that is a symbol that the ordinary life, even the blood, of the married husband and wife, which had before been unaltered, His wine, became filled with the Spirit, and you so wine, because, when love enters, the whole spiritual constitution of a man changes, is filled with the Holy Ghost, and almost his form is altered."

Mrs. Mord thought to herself:

"Yes, poor fellow, his young wife is dead; that is why he makes his love into the Holy Ghost."

They were halfway down their first cup of tea when they heard the clatter of pot-boon.

"Good gracious!" exclaimed Mrs. Mord, in spite of herself.

The minister looked rather scared. Mord snored. He was feeling rather savage. He nodded a "How d'ye do" to the clergyman, who rose to shake hands with him.

"May," said Mord, showing his hand, "look there at it! The river wants its silver hands wif a hand like that, does it?" There's no more pot-boon and shovell-don on it."

The minister flushed with confusion, and sat down again. Mrs. Mord rose, carried out the remaining succubus. Mord took off his coat, dragged his sandwich to table, and sat down heavily.

"Are you tired?" asked the clergyman.

"Tired? I *have* that," replied Mimi. "I've don't know what it is to be tired, as I'm tired."

"No," replied the clergyman.

"Why, look you 'em," said the mother, showing the shoulders of his daughter. "It's a bit dry now, but it's wet as a cloth with sweat when you feel it."

"Goodness!" cried Mrs. Morel. "Mr. Weston doesn't want to feel your sweaty daggles!"

The clergyman put out his hand placidly.

"No, perhaps he doesn't," said Mimi; "but it's all come out of me, whether or not. And every day since my daughter's wedding with Mamma's you got a drink, Mamma, for a man when he comes home huffed up from the pot."

"You know you drunk all the beer," said Mrs. Morel, pouring out his tea.

"An' was there no more to be got?" Turning to the clergyman—"A man gets that huffed up wif th' dew, you know,—that daggled up down a cushion, he needs a drink when he comes home."

"I am sure he does," said the clergyman.

"But it's tea is one of there's best for him."

"There's more,—and there's tea," said Mrs. Morel.

"Water! It's not water w'll clear his throat."

He poured out a saucerful of tea, blew it, and sucked it up through his great black mustache, sighing afterwards. Then he poured out another saucerful, and smacked his cup on the table.

"My dear!" said Mrs. Morel, putting it on a plate.

"A man as comes home as I do 's no need to care about cloths," said Mimi.

"Fry!" exclaimed his wife, automatically.

The room was full of the smell of meat and vegetables and potatoes.

He leaned over to the window, his great mustache almost forward, his mouth very red in his black face.

"Mr. Weston," he said, "a man as has been down the black hole all day, daggled away as a coal fire, y', a right harder does that wall—"

"Needn't make a man of it," put in Mrs. Morel.

She hated her husband because, whenever he had an audience, he whined and played for sympathy. William sitting nursing the baby, hated him, with a boy's hatred, for false sentiment, and for the stupid treatment of his mother. Annie had never liked him; she merely avoided him.

When the visitors had gone, Mrs. Morel looked at her clock.

"A fine man!" she said.

"Don't think I'm going to let my own daughter, even tho' she's got a partner for me, let that?" he hawled.

They were both angry, but she said nothing. The baby began to cry, and Mrs. Morel, picking up a newspaper from the hearth, accidentally knocked Anne on the head, whereupon the girl began to wince, and Morel to shout at her. In the midst of this performance, William looked up at the big gland near over the masthead and read *Gemuetz*:

"God Bless Our House!"

Whereupon Mrs. Morel, trying to soothe the baby, jumped up, snatched at him, bowed his ears, saying:

"What are you putting in for?"

And then she sat down and laughed, till tears ran over her cheeks, while William kicked the stool he had been sitting on, and Morel growled:

"I cannot see what there is so much to laugh at."

One evening, directly after the parents' visit, feeling unable to bear herself after another display from her husband, she took Anne and the baby and went out. Morel had kicked William, and the mother would never forgive him.

She went over the sheep-bridge and across a corner of the meadow to the cricket-ground. The meadow seemed one space of ripe, evening light, whispering with the distant mill-race. She sat on a mat under the alders in the cricket-ground, and looked the evening. Before her, level and solid, spread the big green cricket-field, like the bed of a sea of light. Children played in the black shadow of the pavilion. Many rocks, high up, came down from across the willy-wonky sky. They swooped in a long curve down into the golden glow, commencing, cawing, wheeling, like black flakes on a slow vortex, over a sea-churn that made a dark boss among the pastures.

A few geese were peeping, and Mrs. Morel could hear the cluck of the fowl, and the voices of men suddenly raised; could see the white flocks of men shifting silently over the grass, upon which already the under shadows were smouldering. Away at the grange, one side of the hay-stacks was lit up, the other sides blue-grey. A waggon of sheaves cooled small across the melting yellow light.

The sun was going down. Every open window, the halls of Derbyshire were blazed over with red sunset. Mrs. Morel watched the sun sink from the glimmering sky, leaving a soft flower-like overhead, while the western space went red, as if all the fire had



mean down there, leaving the hill just fasten tight. The moon-tilleash barns across the field stood fully out from the dark leaves, like a garden. A few sheafs of corn in a corner of the fallow stood up as if alive; she imagined them bowing; perhaps her own would be a Joseph. In the east, a mirrored sunset flamed pink against the west's violet. The big haystacks on the hillside, that looked into the glare, were cold.

With Mrs. Morel it was one of those still moments when the small life vanishes, and the beauty of things stands out, and she had the peace and the strength to see herself. Now and again, a smaller eye close to her. Now and again, Annie came up with a handful of silver-currants. The baby was motion on his mother's knee, clenching with his hands at the light.

Mrs. Morel looked down at him. She had devoted this baby like a catastrophe, because of her feeling for her husband. And now she felt strangely towards the infant. Her heart was heavy because of the child, almost as if it were unhealthy, or malformed. Yet it seemed quite well. But she noticed the peculiar lighting of the baby's brow, and the peculiar heaviness of its eyes, as if it were crying to understand something that was pain. She felt, when she looked at her child's dark, breathing pupils, as if a burden were on her heart.

"He looks as if he was thinking about something—quite sorrowful," said Mrs. Klotz.

Suddenly, looking at him, the heavy feeling at the mother's heart melted into passionate grief. She bowed over him, and a few tears shook softly out of her very heart. The baby lifted his fingers.

"My hand!" she cried softly.

And at that moment she felt, in some far inner place of her soul, that she and her husband were guilty.

The baby was looking up at her. It had blue eyes like her own, but its look was heavy, steady, as if it had realized something that had reached some point of its soul.

In her arms lay the defenseless baby. Its deep blue eyes always looking at her unflinching, seemed to drive her innermost thoughts out of her. She no longer loved her husband; she had not wanted this child to come, and there it lay in her arms and galled at her heart. She felt as if the cruel thing that had connected its frail little body with hers had not been broken. A wave of hot love went over her to the infant. She held it close to her face and breast. With all her force, with all her soul she would make up to it for having brought it into the world unloved. She would love it all the more now it was here; carry it in her love. Its clear,

breeding eyes gave her pain and fear. Did it know all about her? When it lay under her breast, had it been listening there? Was there a reproach in its look? She felt the answer made in her breast, with fear and pain.

Once more she was master of the sun lying red on the rim of the hill opposite. She suddenly held up the child in her hands.

"Look!" she said. "Look, my pretty!"

She thrust the infant forward to the crisscross, shuddering sun, almost with relief. She saw him lift his little fat. Then she put him to her breast again, ashamed almost of her impulse to give him back whence he came.

"If he knew," she thought to herself, "what will become of him—what will he be?"

Her heart was anxious.

"I will tell him 'Paul,'" she said suddenly; she knew now why.

After a while she went home. A fine shadow was lying over the deep green meadow, darkening all.

As she expected, she found the house empty. But Miral was home by ten o'clock, and that day, at least, acted peacefully.

Walter Morel was, at this time, exceedingly irritable. His work seemed to exhaust him. When he came home he did not speak cheerily to anybody. If the fire were rather low he bustled about that, he grumbled about his dinner, if the children made a chatter he thrust at them in a way that made their mother's blood hot, and made them hate him.

On the Friday, he was not home by eleven o'clock. The baby was unwell, and was restless, crying if he were put down. Mrs. Morel, tired to death, and still weak, was scarcely under control.

"I wish the morning would come," she said anxiously to herself.

The child at last sank down so deep in her arms. She was too tired to carry him to the cradle.

"But I'll say nothing, whatever time he comes," she said. "It only works me up; I won't say anything. But I know if he does anything it'll make my blood hot," she added to herself.

She sighed, hearing him coming, as if it were something she could not bear. He, taking his revenge, was nearly drunk. She kept her head bent over the child as he entered, not wishing to see him, but it went through her like a flash of hot fire when, in passing, he lurched against the dresser, making the table rattle, and clattered as the white jar broke for support. He hung up his hat and coat, then returned, stood glowering from a distance at her, as she sat bowed over the child.

"Is there nothing to eat in the house?" he asked, anxiously, as

it as a servant. In certain moods of his imagination he affected the clipped, stilted speech of the slaves. Mrs. Marvel hated him most in this condition.

"You know what there is in the house," she said, so coldly, in wounded impotence.

He stared and glared at her without moving a muscle.

"I asked a civil question, and I expect a civil answer," he said affectedly.

"And you got it," she said, still ignoring him.

He glowered again. Then he came unthinkingly forward. He leaned on the table with one hand, and with the other jerked at the table-drawer to get a knife to cut bread. The drawer stuck because he pulled sideways. In a temper he dragged it, so that it flew out badly, and spoons, forks, knives, a tin-lined metalic dump, splashed with a clatter and a clang upon the brick floor. The baby gave a little scowled start.

"What are you doing, clumsy, drunken fool?" the mother cried.

"Then she should get the flamin' dump thrown. The should get up, like other women have to, and wait on a man."

"Wait on you--wait on you?" she cried. "Yes, I can wait!"

"Yes, an' I'll learn thee that's got to. Wait on me, yes, she sh'd wait on me--"

"Never, indeed! I'd wait on a dog at the door first."

"What--what?"

He was trying to sit on the dinner. At her last speech he turned round. His face was crimson, his eyes bloodshot. He stared at her one silent second in threat.

"F--!" she went quickly, in contempt.

He jerked at the drawer in his excitement. It fell out sharply on his shin, and on the table he flung it on her.

One of the servants caught her brow as the shallow dresser crashed into the fireplace. She reeled, almost ill staggered from her chair. To her very soul she was sick, she shaped the child tightly to her bosom. A few mammae clapped, then, with an effort, she brought herself up. The baby was crying piteously. Her left brow was bleeding rather profusely. As she glanced down at the child, her breast heaving, some drops of blood soaked into its white shirt; but the baby was at least not hurt. She belated her head to keep equilibrium, so that the blood ran into her eye.

Walter Marvel remained as he had stood, leaning on the table with one hand, looking blank. When he was sufficiently sure of his balance, he went across to her, clasped, caught hold of the

back of her rocking-chair, almost tipping her out; then, leaning forward over her, and whispering as he spoke, he said, in tone of wondering concern:

"Did it catch thee?"

He swept aside, as if he would push on to the child. With the cinematograph he had lost all balance.

"Go away," she said, struggling to keep her presence of mind. He blossomed. "Let's—let's look at it," he said, thrusting up again.

"Go away!" she cried.

"Let me—let me look at it, too!"

She needed him of detail, felt the unexpected puff of his sweeping grasp on the back of her rocking-chair.

"Go away," she said, and weakly she pushed him off.

He stood, uncertain as balance, gazing upon her. Summoning all her strength she rose, the baby on her arm. By a great effort of will, moving as if in sleep, she went across to the washery, where she bathed her eye for a minute in cold water, but she was too dizzy. Almost but she should return, she returned to her rocking-chair, trembling in every fibre. By instinct, she kept the baby clapped.

Marvel, bothered, had succeeded in pushing the drawer back into its cavity, and was on his knees, groping, with numb pain, for the scattered spoons.

Her brow was still bleeding. Frantically blood got up and came crawling in such towards her.

"What has it done to thee, love?" he asked, in a very wretched, hoarse tone.

"You can see what it's done," she answered.

He stood, bending forward, supported on his hands, which grasped the legs just above the knee. He purred to look at the wound. She drew away from the danger of his face with as great mountains, averting her own face as much as possible. As he looked at her, who was cold and unresponsive as stone, with mouth shut tight, he listened with helplessness and hopelessness of spirit. He was turning directly away, when he saw a drop of blood fall from the several wound into the baby's fringe gleaming hair. Fascinated, he watched the heavy dark drop hang in the gleaming cloud, and pull down the groove. Another drop fell. It would sink through in the baby's scalp. He watched, fascinated, feeling it seek to; then, finally, he quivered back.

"What of this child?" was all he said to him. But her love, intense tears brought his head lower. She softened. "Get me some washing out of the middle drawer," she said.

## THE BIRTH OF PAUL

He shuffled away very obediently, presently returning with a pail, which she tipped before the fire, then put on her forehead, as she sat with the baby on her lap.

"Now that clean pot-stand?"

Again he rummaged and fumbled in the drawer, returning presently with a red, narrow scarf. She took it, and with quivering fingers proceeded to bind it round her head.

"Let me tie it for thee," he said humbly.

"I can do it myself," she replied. When it was done she went upstairs, telling him to make the fire and lock the door.

In the morning Mrs. Morel said:

"I knocked against the latch of the coal-place, when I was getting a rubber in the dark, because the candle blew out." Her two small children leiled up at her with wide, distressed eyes. They said nothing, but their parted lips seemed to express the unconscious tragedy they felt.

What Mrs. Morel lay in bed next day until nearly dinner-time. He did not think of the previous evening's work. He scarcely thought of anything, but he would not think of that. He lay and suffered like a malingering dog. He had been ill myself once; and he was the more damaged because he would never say a word to her, or express his sorrow. He tried to wriggle out of it. "It was her own fault," he said to himself. Nothing, however, could prevent his inner consciousness suffering as him the punishment which one less his spare his man, and which he could only alleviate by drinking.

He felt as if he had not the intention to get up, or to say a word, or to move, but could only lie like a log. Moreover, he had himself violent pains in the head. It was Saturday. Towards noon he rose, sat himself down in the pantry, ate it with his hand dropped, then pulled on his boots, and went out, to return at three o'clock slightly wiser and relieved; then once more straight to bed. He rose again at six in the evening, had tea and went straight out.

Sunday was the same: bed till noon, the Palmation Aunt till a go, dinner, and bed, scarcely a word spoken. When Mrs. Morel went upstairs, towards four o'clock, to put on her Sunday dress, he was fast asleep. She would have felt sorry for him, if he had woken and, "Wife, I'm sorry." But no, he insisted to himself it was her fault. And so he broke himself. So she merely left him alone. There was this deadlock of passion between them, and she was stronger.

The family began tea. Sunday was the only day when all sat down to meals together.

"Isn't my father going to get up?" asked William.

"Let him be," the mother replied.

There was a feeling of misery over all the house. The children hunched the air that was poisoned, and they felt dreary. They were rather dissipated, did not know what to do, what to play at.

Immediately Moral woke he got straight out of bed. That was characteristic of him all his life. He was all for activity. The protracted inactivity of two mornings was riling him.

It was near six o'clock when he got down. That time he entered without hesitation, his varying sensitiveness having hardened again. He did not care any longer what the family thought or felt.

The two things were on the table. William was reading aloud from *The Child's Own*, Anne humming and sewing steadily. "Why?" Both children looked up at once as they heard the approaching clink of their father's stockinged feet, and shrunk as he entered. Yet he was usually indulgent to them.

Moral made the meal alone, brutally. His use and drink were rabidly than he had used. He ate upon to him. The family life withdrew, shrunk away, and became hushed as he entered. But he cared no longer about his situation.

Immediately he had finished tea he rose with elasticity to go out. It was this clarity, this keen to be gone, which so shocked Mrs. Moral. As she heard him moving heavily in cold water, heard the eager scratch of the steel comb on the side of the bowl, as he wetted his hair, she closed her eyes in despair. As he bent over, licking his boots, there was a certain vulgar gusto in his movement that divided him from the reserved, watchful eye of the family. He always ran away from the battle with himself. Even in his own heart's privacy, he deceived himself, saying, "If she hadn't said so-and-so, it would never have happened. She asked for what she's got." The children walked in rooming during his preparations. When he had gone, they agreed with each.

He closed the door behind him, and was glad. It was a rainy evening. The Palmerton would be the color. He hastened forward to amputation. All the dark roof of the Barrow above black with wet. The roads, always dark with coal-dust, were full of blackish mud. He hastened along. The Palmerton windows were stained over. The passage was padded with wet feet. But the air was warm, if foul, and full of the sound of voices and the smell of beer and music.

"What shall he's, William?" cried a voice, as soon as Moral appeared in the doorway.

"Oh, Jim, my lad, wherever has that young trac?"

The man made a seat for him, and took him in warmly. He

was glad. In a minute or two they had turned all responsibility out of town, all shame, all trouble, and he was clear as a bell for a jolly night.

On the Wednesday following, David was generous. He decided his wife. Hearing from her, he heard her. He did not know what to do with himself that evening, having not even business with which to go to the Polytechnic, and being already rather deeply in debt. So, while his wife was down the garden with the child, he hunted in the top drawer of the dresser where she kept her purse, found it, and looked inside. It contained a half-crown, two halfpennies, and a soapbox. He took the soapbox, put the purse carefully back, and went out.

The next day, when she wanted to pay the grocer's bill, she looked in the purse for her soapbox, and her heart sank to her shoes. Then she sat down and thought: "Was there a soapbox? I hadn't seen it, had I? And I hadn't left it anywhere else?"

She was much put about. She hunted round everywhere for it. And, as she sought, the conviction came into her heart that her husband had taken it. What she had in her purse was all the money she possessed. But that he should sneak it from her was very unpleasant. He had done so twice before. The first time she had not accused him, and at the week-end he had put the shilling again into her purse. So that was how she had known he had taken it. The second time he had not paid back.

The next time she it was no more. When he had had his dinner—he came home early that day—she said to him coldly:

"Did you take soapbox out of my purse last night?"

"Me!" he said, looking up in an offended way. "No, I didn't! I never dropped eyes on your purse."

But she could detect the lie.

"Why, you know you did," she said quietly.

"I told you I didn't," he shouted. "Yer ar me again, ar yer? I've had about enough o't."

"So you flick soapbox out of my purse while I'm telling the kitchen in."

"I'll may yer pay for that," he said, pushing back his chair in desperation. He braced and got washed, then went downrattled upstairs. Presently he came down dressed, and with a big bundle in a blue-checked, enormous handkerchief.

"And now," he said, "you'll not go again when you do."

"I'll be better I were so," she replied, and so then he combed out of the house with his bundle. She sat trembling slightly, but her heart brimming with courage. What would she do if he went to do an other job, shodden work, and got in with another

woman? But she knew him too well—he couldn't. She was dead sure of him. Nevertheless her heart was gnawed inside her.

"Where's my dad?" said William, coming in from school.

"He says he's run away," replied the mother.

"Where to?"

"Oh, I don't know. He's taken a bundle in the blue handkerchief, and now he's not coming back."

"What shall we do?" cried the boy.

"Oh, never trouble, he won't go far."

"But if he doesn't come back," wailed Annie.

And she and William retired to the sofa and wept. Mrs. Morel sat and laughed.

"You pair of gobs!" she exclaimed. "You'll see him before the night's out."

But the children were not to be consoled. Twilight came on. Mrs. Morel grew anxious from very weariness. One part of her said, it would be a relief to see the face of him; another part feared because of keeping the children; and inside her, as yet, she could not quite let him go. At the bottom, she knew very well he could not go.

When she went down to the coal-place at the end of the garden, however, she felt something behind the door. So she looked. And there in the dark lay the big blue bundle. She sat on a piece of coal in front of the bundle and laughed. Every time she saw it, so fat and yet so ignominious, stuck into its corner in the dark, with its ends flopping like dejected ears from the lawn, she laughed again. She was relieved.

Mrs. Morel sat waiting. He had not any money, she knew, so if he stopped he was running up a bill. She was very tired of him—tired to death. He had not even the courage to carry his bundle beyond the yard-end.

At the midnight, at about nine o'clock, he opened the door and came in, shivering, and yet sultry. She said not a word. He took off his coat, and clunked to his armchair, where he began to take off his boots.

"You'd better fetch your bundle before you take your boots off," she said quietly.

"You may thank your stars I've come back to-night," he said, looking up from under his drooped head, sulkily, trying to be unresponsive.

"Why, where should you have gone? You dare'n't even get your parcel through the yard-end," she said.

He looked such a fool she was not even angry with him. He continued to take his boots off and prepare for bed.



"I don't know what's on your blue handkerchief," she said. "But if you leave it the children shall look at it in the morning."

Unhappily, he got up and went out of the house, returning presently and crossing the kitchen with averted face, hurrying upstairs. As Mrs. Moral saw him dash quickly through the door downstairs, holding his handie, she laughed to herself. But her heart was bitter, because she had loved him.

*The Casting off of Mabel—the Taking on of William*

**D**URING the next week Mabel's struggle was almost unbearable. Like all sinners, he was a great lover of narcotics, which, strangely enough, he would often pay for himself.

"You must get me a drop o' lace vital," he said. "It's a wonder as we cannot ha'e a drop o' the 'same."

So Mrs. Mabel bought him clear of violet, his favorite first medicine. And he made himself a jug of wormwood tea. He had been in the attic great bunches of dried herbs: wormwood, rue, horehound, dill-flow-ers, parsnip-root, mr. St-mallow, hyssop, dandelion, and rennet. Usually it was a jug of one or other decoction standing on the hoe, from which he drank largely.

"Grand!" he said, smacking his lips after wormwood. "Grand!" And he comforted the children so.

"It's better than any of your tea or your cocoa wine," he would say. But they were not to be tempted.

Thus time, however, neither pain nor violet nor all his herbs would shift the "sassy poison in his head." He was suffering for no attack of an inflammation of the brain. He had never been well since his sleeping on the ground when he went with Jerry to Nottingham. Since then he had drunk and smoked. Now he felt severely ill, and Mrs. Mabel had him to nurse. He was one of the worst patients imaginable. But, in spite of all, and putting aside the fact that he was bread-winner, she never quite wanted him to die. Still there was one part of her wanted him for herself.

The neighbors were very good to her: occasionally some had the children in to nurse, occasionally some would do the domestic work for her, one would mind the baby for a day. But it was a great drag, nevertheless. It was not every day the neighbors helped. Then she had mending of baby and husband, cleaning and cooking, everything to do. She was quite worn out, but she did what was wanted of her.

And the money was just sufficient. She had seventeen shillings a week from clubs, and even Friday Barker and the other butty put a portion of the stall's profits for Mabel's wife. And the neighbors made hordies, and gave eggs, and such meekish' trifles. If

they had not helped her so generously in those times, Mrs. Moral would never have pulled through, without incurring debts that would have dragged her down.

The weeks passed. Moral, almost against hope, grew better. He had a fast constitution, so that, even on the second, he went straight forward to recovery. Soon he was pottering about domesticity. During his illness the wife had quite busy a little. Now he wanted her to continue. He often put his hand to his head, pulled down the corners of his mouth, and murmured pains he did not feel. But there was no deceiving her. At last she merely smiled to herself. Then she scolded him sharply.

"Goodness, man, don't be so lachrymose."

That wounded him slightly, but still he continued to play sickly.

"I wouldn't be such a marly baby," said he with dignity.

Then he was indignant, and curled under his breath, like a boy. He was forced to resume a normal tone, and to cease to whine.

Nevertheless, there was a state of peace in the house for some time. Mrs. Moral was more tolerant of him, and he, depending on her almost like a child, was rather happy. Neither knew that the wife was more tolerant because she loved him less. Up till that time, in spite of all, he had been her husband and her son. She had felt that, more or less, what he did to himself he did to her. Her living depended on him. There were many, many stages in the ebbing of her love for him, but it was always ebbing.

Now, with the birth of this third baby, himself no longer set towards him, helplessly, but was like a rule that severely sets, standing off from him. After that she scarcely deigned him. And, standing more aloof from him, was finding him so much part of herself, but merely part of her circumstances, she did not mind so much what he did, could leave him alone.

There was the half, the whittleness about the coming year, which is like autumn in a man's life. His wife was casting him off, half regretfully, but reluctantly: casting him off and turning new for love and life to the children. Handfastened he was more or less a traitor. And he half acquiesced, as so many men do, putting their place to their children.

During his recuperation, when it was really over between them, both made an effort to come back somewhat to the old relationship of the first months of their marriage. He sat at home and, when the children were in bed, and this was evening—the day all her sewing by hand, made all shirts and children's clothing—he

would read to her from the newspaper, slowly pronouncing and delivering the words like a man, patching spaces. Often she hurried him on, giving him a place in anticipation. And thus he took her words kindly.

The silence between them were peculiar. There would be the click, slight "click," of her needle, the sharp "pop" of her lips as he let out the stitches, the warmth, the wrinkle on the brow as he spat on the fire. Then her thoughts turned to William. Already he was getting a big boy. Already he was up of the class, and the master said he was the smartest lad in the school. She saw him a man, young, full of vigour, making the world glow again for her.

And Mabel sitting there, quite alone, and having nothing to think about, would be feeling vaguely uncomfortable. His soul would reach out in its blind way to her and find her gone. He felt a sort of emptiness, almost like a vacuum in his soul. He was unsettled and restless. Soon he could not live in that atmosphere, and he suffered his wife. Both felt an oppression on their breathing when they were left together for some time. Then he went to bed and she sat down to enjoy herself alone, working, thinking, living.

Meanwhile another infant was crying, fruit of this little peace and tenderness between the separating parents. Paul was seven-and-a-half months old when the new baby was born. He was then a plump, pale child, quiet, with heavy blue eyes, and still the peculiar slight smiling of the babies. The last child was also a boy, fair and beauty. Miss Mabel was sorry when she knew she was with child, both for economic reasons and because she did not love her husband; but not for the sake of the babies.

They called the baby Arthur. He was very pretty, with a mop of gold curls, and he loved his father from the first. Miss Mabel was glad this child loved the father. Hearing the mother's footsteps, the baby would put up his arms and crows. And if Mabel were in good temper, he called back immediately, in his hearty, mellow voice:

"What then, my beauty? I shall come to thee in a minute."

And as soon as he had taken off his pig-coat, Miss Mabel would put an apron round the child, and give him to his father.

"What a sight the lad looks!" she would exclaim sometimes, taking back the baby, that was reunited on the floor from his father's knees and play. Then Mabel laughed joyfully:

"He's a little collier, blue as his bit of smut!" he exclaimed.

And thus were the happy moments of her life now, when the children included the father in her heart.

Meanwhile William grew bigger and stronger and more active,

while Fred, always rather delicate and quiet, got thinner, and worried after his mother like her shadow. He was usually active and interested, but sometimes he would have fits of depression. Then the mother would find the key of these in her crying as she sat.

"What's the matter?" she asked, and got no answer.

"What's the matter?" she asked, getting cross.

"I don't know," sobbed the child.

So she tried to reason him out of it, or to soothe him, but without effect. It made her feel beside herself. Then the father, always impatient, would jump from his chair and shout:

"If he doesn't stop, I'll scold him till he does."

"You'll do nothing of the sort," said the mother coldly. And then she carried the child into the yard, plunged him into his little bath, and said: "Now try there, Mummy!"

And then, as butterfly on the ribbon leaves perhaps caught his eye, or at last he closed himself to sleep. There he were not often, but they caused a shadow in Mrs. Moore's heart, and her treatment of Fred was different from that of the other children.

Suddenly one morning as she was looking down the alley of the Bureau for the harmonium, she heard a voice calling her. It was the thin little Mrs. Anthony in brown velvet.

"Here, Mrs. Moore, I want to tell you about your Willie."

"Oh, do you?" replied Mrs. Moore. "Why, what's the matter?"

"A lad as goes 'old of another ar' rips his clothes off'n 'is back," Mrs. Anthony said, "were showing something."

"Your Alfred's as old as my William," said Mrs. Moore.

"'Appen 'e is, but that doesn't give him a right to get hold of the boy's collar, an' tear up 'is skin off 'is back."

"Well," said Mrs. Moore, "I don't thrash my children, and even if I did, I should want to hear their side of the tale."

"They'd happen be a bit better if they did get a good thrashing," retorted Mrs. Anthony. "When it comes to ripping a lad's skin collar off'n 'is back a-purpose——"

"I'm sure he didn't do it on purpose," said Mrs. Moore.

"Make me a liar!" shouted Mrs. Anthony.

Mrs. Moore moved away and closed her gate. Her hand trembled as she held her nose off harm.

"But I'll let your master know," Mrs. Anthony cried after her.

At dinner time, when William had finished his meal and retired to be off again—he was then eleven years old—his mother said to him:

"What did you hear Alfred Anthony's collar for?"

"When did I tear his collar?"

"I don't know when, but his mother says you did."

"Why—it was yesterday—and it was torn already."

"But you tore it more."

"Well, I'd got a collar as 'ad 'olled sevennens—and Ally, An'ny 's says:

"Adam an' Eve an' piousness,  
Went down to a river to bide,  
Adam an' Eve got drowned,  
When do you think got saved?"

An' so I says, "Oh, Piousness" an' as I pushed 'em, an' 'e was mad, an' so he snatched my collar an' ran off with it. An' so I ran after 'em, an' when I was getting hold of 'em, 'e dodged, an' 'e ripped 'is collar. But I got my collar—"

He pulled from his pocket a black old horse-dustcoat hanging on a string. This old collar had "collared"—he said unashamed—severnens other collars on similar strings. So the boy was proud of his vintage.

"Well," said Mrs. Morel, "you know you've got no right to rip his collar."

"Well, our mother!" he answered. "I never meant to do damage—it was only an old indurubber collar as was torn already."

"Now then," said his mother, "you be more careful. I shouldn't like it if you came home with your collar torn off."

"I don't care, our mother; I never did it a-purpose."

The boy was rather miserable at being reprimanded.

"No—well, you be more careful."

William had away, glad to be exonerated. And Mrs. Morel who heard any bother with the neighbours, thought she would explain to Mrs. Anchoy, and the business would be over.

But that evening Morel came in from the pit looking very sour. His mood in the kitchen and placed round, but did not speak for some minutes. Then:

"Whear's that Willy?" he asked.

"What do you want him for?" asked Mrs. Morel, who had guessed.

"I'll let 'em know when I get him," said Morel, hanging his jacket on to the dresser.

"I suppose Mrs. Anchoy's got hold of you and been yarning to you about that Ally's collar," said Mrs. Morel, rather anxious.

"Naw, naw, who's got hold of me," said Morel. "When I get hold of 'em I'll make 'em honest."

"It's a poor tale," said Mrs. Morel, "that you're so ready to

## THE CASTING OFF OF MORIEL

side with any wilyer wizen who likes to come telling tales against your own children."

"I'll learn 'em!" said Moriel. "It none matters to me whoes led 's ay, 's 's none goid' sippin' an' marin' about just as he's a man."

"Sippin' and marin' about?" repeated Mrs. Moriel. "He was running after that Alf, which takes his ribber and he accidentally got hold of his collar, because the other dodged—so an Anthony would."

"I know!" shouted Moriel threateningly.

"You would, before you're told," replied his wife bravely.

"Shiver you mine!" roared Moriel. "I know my business!"

"That's more than doubtful," said Mrs. Moriel, "supposing some local mouthed crookers had been getting you to threaten your own children."

"I know," repeated Moriel.

And he said no more, but sat and stared his bad temper. Suddenly William ran in, saying:

"Can I have my tea, mother?"

"The can be's more than that!" shouted Moriel.

"Hold your nose, man," said Mrs. Moriel; "and don't look so ridiculous!"

"He'll look ridiculous before I've done w' him!" shouted Moriel, rising from his chair and glaring at his son.

William, who was a tall lad for his years, but very sensitive, had gone pale, and was looking in a sort of horror at his father.

"Go out!" Mrs. Moriel commanded her son.

William had not the wit to move. Suddenly Moriel clenched his fist, and crouched.

"I'll go's him ' go out!" he shouted like an insane thing.

"What?" cried Mrs. Moriel, panting with rage. "You shall not touch him for her calling, you shall not!"

"Shanna!?" shouted Moriel. "Shanna!?"

And, glaring at the boy, he ran forward. Mrs. Moriel sprang in between them, with her fist lifted.

"Don't you dare!" she cried.

"What?" he shouted, baffled for the moment. "What?"

She sprang round to her son.

"Go out of the house!" she commanded him in fury.

The boy, as if hypnotized by her, turned suddenly and was gone. Moriel rushed to the door, but was too late. He returned, pale under his pinkish with fury. But now his wife was fairly roared.

"Only dare!" she said in a loud, ringing voice. "Only dare, villain, to lay a finger on that child! You'll regret it for ever!"

He was afraid of her. In a twinkling rage, he was driven.

When the children were old enough to be left, Mrs. Morel joined the Women's Guild. It was a little club of women attached to the Co-operative Wholesale Society, which met on Monday nights in the large room over the grocery shop of the Bestwood "Co-op." The women were supposed to discuss the benefits to be derived from co-operation, and other social questions. Sometimes Mrs. Morel read a paper. It seemed queer to the children to see their mother, who was always busy about the house, sitting writing in her rapid fashion, thinking, referring to books, and writing again. They felt for her an such conscious the deepest respect.

But they loved the Guild. It was the only thing to which they did not grudge their mother—and that partly because she enjoyed it, partly because of the treats they derived from it. The Guild was called by some hostile husbands, who found their wives getting too independent, the "chit-chat" shop—that is, the gossip-shop. It is true, from off the basis of the Guild, the women could look at their homes, at the conditions of their own lives, and find fault. So the children found their women had a new standard of their own, rather disconcerting. And also, Mrs. Morel always had a lot of news on Monday nights, so that the children liked William to be in when their mother came home, because she told him things.

Then, when the lad was thirteen, she got him a job in the "Co-op." office. He was a very clever boy, frank, with rather rough features and real Viking blue eyes.

"What does want me ma's a stock-horned Jack on 'em feet?" said Morel. "All he'll do is to wear his belcher behind out, as 'ere nose. What's 'e startin' wif?"

"It doesn't matter what he's startin' wif," said Mrs. Morel.

"It wouldn't! But 'em / ch' put wif me, an' 'e'll earn a nice ten shillin' a wk from ch' start. But no shakin' waster! he truck-and-out on a stool's better than ten shillin' / ch' put wif me, I know."

"He is no going in the pot," said Mrs. Morel, "and there's no end of it."

"It was good enough for me, but it's not good enough for 'em."

"If your mother put you in the pot at twelve, it's no reason why I should do the same with my lad."

"Tut-tut! It was a right allow that!"

"Whichever it was," said Mrs. Morel.

She was very proud of her son. He went to the night-school, and learned shorthand, so that by the time he was sixteen he was the best shorthand clerk and book-keeper on the place, except



one. Then he taught in the night-school. But he was so busy that only his good nature and his star protected him.

All the things that men do—the dinner things—William did. He could run like the wind. When he was twelve, he won a first prize in a race; an instant of glass, shaped like an arrow. It sped proudly on the dinner, and gave Mrs. Morel a keen pleasure. The boy only ran for fun. He flew home with his sword, impatient, with a "Look, mother!" That was the first real tribute he himself felt such it like a queen.

"How pretty!" she exclaimed.

Then he began to get ambitious. He gave all his money to his mother. When he earned fourteen shillings a week, she gave him back two for himself, and, as he never drank, he felt himself rich. He went about with the bourgeois of Bowwood. The tourist counted nothing higher than the clergyman. Then came the bank manager, then the doctor, then the tradespeople, and after that the hosts of soldiers. William hoped to converse with the sons of the chamber, the schoolmaster, and the tradesman. He played billiards at the Mechanics Hall. Also he danced—that is spite of his mother. All the life that Bowwood offered he enjoyed, from the lottery-hope down Church Street, to sports and billiards.

Paul was treated to dancing descriptions of all kinds of flower-like ladies, none of whom lived like our bloomers in William's heart for a brief instant!

Constantly some flame would come in pursuit of her errand vein. Mrs. Morel would find a strange god at the door, and immediately she stifled the air.

"Is Mr. Morel in?" the dancer would ask appealingly.

"My husband is at home," Mrs. Morel replied.

"I—I mean young Mr. Morel," repeated the maiden painfully.

"Which one? There are several."

Whereupon much blushing and murmuring from the fair one.

"I—I met Mr. Morel—at Rugby," she explained.

"Oh—at a dance?"

"Yes."

"I don't approve of the girls my son meets at dances. And he is not at home."

Then he came home angry with his mother for having turned the girl away so rudely. He was a civilian, yet eagle-looking fellow, who walked with long strides, sometimes bounding, often with his cap pushed jolly in the back of his head. Now he came to bounding. He threw his cap on to the table, and took his strong jaw in his hand, and glared down at his mother. She was small, with her hair taken straight back from her forehead. She had a

quiet air of authority, and yet of real warmth. Knowing her son was angry, she trembled inwardly.

"Did a lady call for me yesterday, mother?" he asked.

"I don't know about a lady. There was a girl came."

"And who didn't you tell me?"

"Because I sleep, simply."

He forced a little.

"A good-looking girl—seemed a lady?"

"I didn't look at her."

"But how eyes?"

"I did not look. And tell your girls, my son, that when they're running after you, they've got to come and ask your mother for you. Tell them that—brown baggages you meet at dancing classes."

"I'm sure she was a nice girl."

"And I'm sure she wasn't."

There ended the altercation. Over the dancing there was a great rift between the mother and the son. The grievance reached its height when William said he was going to Hacknall Tostard—considered a low town—to a fancy-dress ball. He was to be a Highlander. There was a dress he could hire, which one of his friends had had, and which fitted him perfectly. The Highlander suit came home. Mrs. Wood received it coldly and would not speak it.

"My son come!" cried William.

"There's a parcel in the front-room."

He rushed in and cut the string.

"How do you fancy your son in that?" he said, exultant, showing her the suit.

"You know I don't want to fancy you in it."

On the evening of the dance, when he had come home to dress, Mrs. Wood put on her coat and bonnet.

"Aren't you going to stop and see me mother?" he asked.

"No; I don't want to see you," she replied.

She was rather pale, and her face was almost as hard. She was afraid of her son's going the same way as his father. He boasted a moustache, and his heart stood still with anxiety. That he caught sight of the Highlander bonnet with its ribbons. He pecked it up quickly, forgetting her. She went out.

When he was sixteen he suddenly left the Corp. office and got a situation in Nottingham. In his new place he had thirty shillings a week instead of eighteen. This was indeed a run. His mother and his father were broken up with pride. Everybody praised William. It seemed he was going to get on rapidly. Mrs.

Moriel hoped, with his aid, to help her younger sons. Anne was now studying to be a teacher. Paul, also very clever, was getting on well, having lessons in French and German from his godfather, the clergyman who was still a friend to Mrs. Moriel. Arthur, a quick and very good-looking boy, was at the Board-school, but there was talk of him trying to get a scholarship for the High School in Nottingham.

William remained a year at his new post in Nottingham. He was studying hard, and growing serious. Something seemed to be fretting him. Still he went out to the dances and the dear parties. He did not drink. The children were all raised themselves. He came home very late at night, and sat yet longer studying. His mother employed him to take messages, to do one thing or another.

"Dance, if you want to dance, my son; but don't think you can work in the office, and then amuse yourself, and then study on top of all. You can't; the human frame won't stand it. Do one thing or the other—amuse yourself or learn Latin; but don't try to do both."

Then he got a place in London, at a hundred and twenty a year. This seemed a fabulous sum. His mother doubted almost whether to rejoice or to grieve.

"They want me on Lime Street on Monday week, mother," he cried, his eyes blazing as he read the letter. Mrs. Moriel felt everything go all round her. He read the letter: "'And will you reply by Thursday whether you accept. Yours faithfully—' They want me, mother, at a hundred and twenty a year, and don't even ask to see me. Didn't I tell you I could do it! Think of me in London! And I can give you twenty pounds a year, more. We'll all be rolling in money."

"We shan't, my son," she answered sadly.

It never occurred to her that she might be more hurt at his going away than glad of his success. Indeed, as the days drew near for his departure, her heart began to sick and grow dimmy with despair. She loved him so much! More than that, she hoped in him so much. Almost she lived by him. She tried to do things for him: she tried to put a cap for his use and to iron his collars, of which he was so proud. It was a joy to her to have him proud of his collars. There was no laundry. So she used to rub away at them with her little carved ones, to polish them, till they shone from the sharp pressure of her arms. Now she would not do it for him. Now he was going away. She felt almost as if he were going as well out of her heart. His did not seem to leave her unharmed with himself. That was the grief and the pain to her. He took nearly all himself away.

A few days before his departure—he was just twenty—she burned his booklets. They had hung on a file at the top of the kitchen cupboard. From some of them he had read extracts to her mother. Some of them she had taken the trouble to read herself. But most were too trivial.

Now, on the Saturday morning he said:

"Come on, Pops, let's go through my letters, and you can have the back and cover."

Mrs. More had done her Saturday's work on the Friday, because he was having a last day's holiday. She was making him a rice cake, which he loved, to take with him. He was scarcely conscious that she was so miserable.

He took the first letter off the file. It was envelope-torn, and had purple and green stains. William sniffed the page.

"Nice smell! Smell!"

And he thrust the sheet under Paul's nose.

"Use!" said Paul, breathing in. "What if you call it? Smell, mother."

His mother ducked her head, like nose down to the paper.

"I don't want to smell their rubbish," she said, sniffing.

"The girl's father," said William, "is as rich as Croesus. He owns property without end. She calls me Lohyetta, because I love Pops. 'You will see, I've forgiven you'—I like her forgiving me. 'I told mother about you this morning, and she will have much pleasure if you come to tea on Sunday, but she will have to get father's consent also. I sincerely hope he will agree. I will let you know how it transpires. H, however, you—'"

"Let you know how it's what?" interrupted Mrs. More.

"Transpire—oh you!"

"Transpire!" repeated Mrs. More stupidly. "I thought she was so well educated!"

William felt slightly uncomfortable, and abandoned his maiden, giving Paul the corner with the sheet. He continued to read extracts from his letters, some of which amused his mother, some of which saddened her and made her anxious for him.

"My lad," she said, "they're very wise. They know they've only got to flatter your vanity, and you come up to them like a dog that has its head scratched."

"Well, they can't go on scratching for ever," he replied. "And when they've done, I run away."

"But one day you'll find a string round your neck that you can't pull off," she answered.

"Not me! I'm equal to any of 'em, mother, they ain't no better than I!"

"You flatter yourself," she said quietly.

Soon there was a heap of rounded black pages, all that remained of the file of accepted letters, except that Paul had thirty or thirty pretty tickets from the corners of the note-paper--eggshells and sage-green and red sprays. And William went to London, to start a new file.

### *The Young Life of Paul*

Paul would be built like his mother, slightly and rather small. His fair hair went reddish, and then dark brown, his eyes were grey. He was a pale, quiet child, with ears that seemed to flutter, and with a fall, drooping underlip.

As a rule he seemed old for his years. He was so conscious of what other people felt, particularly his mother. When she frowned he understood, and could have no peace. His soul seemed always attentive to her.

As he grew older he became stronger. William was too far removed from him to accept him as a companion. So the smaller boy belonged to Ann almost entirely as Annie. She was a tomboy and a "flyer-flyer," as her mother called her. But she was intensely kind of her second brother. So Paul was loved regard at the back of Annie, sharing her games. She raced wildly at hockey with the other young athletes of the Eastern. And always Paul flew beside her, living her share of the game, having as yet no part of his own. He was quiet and not noticeable. But his sister adored him. He always seemed to care for things if she wanted him to.

She had a big doll of which she was fondly proud, though not so fond. So she laid the doll on the sofa, and covered it with an antimacassar, to sleep. Then she forgot it. Meanwhile Paul must pass on jumping off the sofa arm. So he pamped crash into the face of her bedtime doll. Annie rushed up, uttered a loud wail, and sat down to weep a dirge. Paul remained quite still.

"You couldn't tell it was there, mother; you couldn't tell it was there," he repeated over and over. So long as Annie wept for the doll he sat helpless with misery. Her grief went still out. She forgave her brother—he was so much upset. But a day or two afterwards she was shocked.

"Let's make a quonset of Anabella," he said. "Let's burn her."

She was horrified, yet rather fascinated. She vowed to see what the boy would do. He made an altar of bricks, pulled some of the shavings out of Anabella's body, put the waxes tapers into the hollow face, poured on a little paraffin, and set the whole thing alight. He watched with wicked satisfaction the drops of

was walt off the broken forehead of Anabella, and deep his went into the flame. So long as the smug bag doll burned he rejoiced in silence. At the end he pined among the embers with a stick, fished out the arms and legs, all blackened, and smashed them under stones.

"That's the sacrifice of Miss Anabella," he said. "And I'm glad there's nothing left of her."

Which disturbed Aunt Maudie, although she could not confess. He seemed to love the doll so intensely, because he had broken it.

All the children, but particularly Paul, were peculiarly afraid their father, along with their mother. Maud continued to bully and to drink. He had periods, months at a time, when he made the whole life of the family a misery. Paul never forgot coming home from the Head of Hope one Monday evening and finding his mother with her eyes swollen and discoloured, his father standing on the hearthrug, feet aside, his head down, and William, just home from work, glaring at his father. There was a silence as the young children entered, but none of the elders looked round.

William was white as the lips, and his fists were clenched. He walked amid the children were silent, watching with children's eyes and ears; then he said:

"You coward, you don't do it when I was in."

But Maud's blood was up. He swung round on his son. William was bigger, but Maud was hard-muscle, and mad with fury.

"Don't I?" he shouted. "Don't I? How much more - my child, my young foolery, or I'll make my life about that. Ah! no! I shall find, that are."

Maud crouched at the hearth and showed his face in an ugly, almost beast-like delivery. William was white with rage.

"Will you?" he said, quiet and intense. "It had to be the last time, though."

Maud clanked a little nearer, crouching, drawing back his fist to strike. William put his face ready. A light came into his blue eyes, almost like a laugh. He watched his father. Another word and the men would have begun to fight. Paul hoped they would. The three children sat pale on the sofa.

"Stop it, both of you," cried Miss Maudie in a hard voice. "We've had enough for our night. And you," she said, turning off to her husband, "look at your children!"

Maud glanced at the sofa.

"Look at the children, you nasty little beast!" he roared. "Why, what have I done to the children, I should like to know?"

But they're like yourself, you've got 'em up to your own tricks and many ways—you've learned 'em to it, you 'ave."

She refused to answer him. No one spoke. After a while he threw his hands under the table and went to bed.

"Why didn't you let me have a go at him?" and William, whom his father was upstairs. "I could easily have beaten him."

"A nice thing—your own father," she replied.

"Father!" repeated William. "Call him up father!"

"Well, be a--and so—"

"But why don't you let me beat him? I could do, easily."

"The idea!" she cried. "It hasn't come to that yet."

"No," he said, "it's come to worse. Look at yourself! Why didn't you let me give it him?"

"Because I couldn't bear it, or never think of it," she cried quickly.

And the children went to bed, miserably.

When William was growing up, the family moved from the Cottage to a house on the brow of the hill, commanding a view of the valley, which spread out like a narrow wooden-shed, or a slump-shed, below it. In front of the house was a huge old ash-tree. The west wind, sweeping from Derbyshire, caught the house with full force, and the tree stretched again. Mervil liked it.

"It's mine," he said. "It sends me to sleep."

But Paul and Arthur and Anne hated it. To Paul it became almost a demoniacal noise. The winter of their first year in the new house their father was very bad. The children played in the street, on the brow of the wide, dark valley, until eight o'clock. Then they went to bed. Their mother sat sewing below. Having such a great space in front of the house gave the children a feeling of night, of vastness, and of terror. The terror came in from the darkness of the tree and the anguish of the house disorder. Often Paul would wake up, after he had been asleep a long time, terror of shade descending. Instantly he was wide awake. Then he heard the booming shouts of his father, come home nearly drunk, then the sharp sputter of his machine, then the long, long of his father's lie on the table, and the noisy snoring shout as the man's voice got higher. And then the whole was drowned in a passing melody of shunts and crows from the great, wind-swept ash-tree. The children lay silent as suspects, waiting for a call in the wood or howl what their father was doing. He might let their mother again. There was a feeling of horror, a kind of bracing in the darkness, and a sense of blood. They lay with their hearts in the grip of an intense suspense. The wind came through the tree flatter and flatter. All the crows of the great long hummed, whistled, and



swished. And then came the horror of the sudden silence, silence everywhere, outside and downstairs. What was it? Was it a silence of blood? What had he done?

The children lay and bewailed the darkness. And then, at last, they heard their father creep down his legs and tramp upstairs in his stocking feet. Still they listened. There at last, if the wind allowed, they heard the water of the tap-dreaming into the kettle, which their mother was filling for morning, and they could go to sleep in peace.

In they were happy in the morning—happy, very happy playing, dancing at right round the lonely lamp-post in the midst of the darkness. But they had one tight place of anxiety in their hearts, one darkness in their eyes, which shamed all their lives.

Paul heard his father. As a boy he had a fervent promise religion.

"Make him stop drinking," he prayed every night. "Lord, let my father die," he prayed very often. "Let him not be killed as yet," he prayed when, after tea, the father did not come home from work.

That was another time when the family suffered intensely. The children came from school and had their tea. On the hob the big black samovar was simmering, the samovar was in the oven, ready for Moseff's dinner. He was expected at five o'clock. But for months he would stop and drink every night on his way from work.

In the winter nights, when it was cold, and grew dark early, Mrs. Morel would put a brass candlestick on the table, light a tallow candle to save the gas. The children finished their bread and butter, or dripping, and were ready to go out to play. But if Morel had not come they waited. The sense of his coming in all his gas-dirt, drinking, after a long day's work, not coming home and resting and washing, but coming, going drunk, on an empty stomach, made Mrs. Morel unable to bear herself. From her the feeling was transmitted to the other children. She never suffered alone any more: the children suffered with her.

Paul went out to play with the rest. Down in the great trough of twilight, tiny streaks of light burned where the gas were. A few last colliers struggled up the dim field-path. The lamp-lighter came along. No more colliers came. Darkness shut down over the valley. Work was gone. It was night.

Then Paul ran anxiously into the kitchen. The one candle still burned on the table, the big fire glowed red. Mrs. Morel sat alone. On the hob the samovar simmered: the dinner-plate lay waiting on the table. All the room was full of the sense of waiting, waiting for the man who was sitting in his gas-dirt, disordered, some mile

away from home, across the darkness, drinking himself drunk Paul stood in the doorway.

"Has dad come?" he asked.

"You can't be sure," said Mrs. Morel, even with the fall of the question.

Then the boy dabbled about near his mother. They shared the same anxiety. Presently Mrs. Morel went out and retained the position.

"They're ruined and black," she said; "but what do I care?"

Not many words were spoken. Paul almost hated his mother for suffering because his father did not come home from work.

"What do you bother yourself for?" he said. "If he wants to stop and get drunk, why don't you let him?"

"Let him?" shrieked Mrs. Morel. "You may well say 'let him.'"

She knew that the man who stops on the way home from work is on a quick way to ruining himself and his home. The children were yet young, and depended on the breadwinner. William gave her the sense of relief, providing her at last with someone to turn to if Morel failed. But the same atmosphere of the room on these waiting evenings was the same.

The minutes ticked away. At six o'clock still the cloth lay on the table, still the dinner stood waiting, still the same sense of anxiety and expectation in the room. The boy could not stand any longer. He could not go out and play. So he ran in to Mrs. Ingou, next door but one, for her to talk to him. She had no children. Her husband was good to her, but was in a shop, and came home late. So, when she saw the lad at the door, she called:

"Come in, Paul."

The two sat talking for some time, when suddenly the boy rose crying.

"Well, I'll be going and seeing if my mother wants an errand doing."

He pretended to be perfectly cheerful, and did not tell his friend what ailed him. Then he ran indoors.

Morel at that time came in cheerful and happy.

"This is a nice time to come home," said Mrs. Morel.

"What's it matter to ye? what time I come when?" he shouted.

And everybody in the house was still, because he was dangerous. He ate his food in the most brutal manner possible, and, when he had done, pushed all the pots in a heap away from him, to lay his arms on the table. Then he went to sleep.

Paul hated his father so. The father's small, mean head, with its black hair slightly rolled with grey, lay on the bare arms, and

the face, dirty and swollen, with a fleshy nose and thin, puffy brows, was turned sideways, asleep with fear and weakness and rusty temper. If anyone entered suddenly, or a noise were made, the man looked up and shouted:

"I'll lay my fist about thy y'ead, I'm tellin' thee, if the doona stop that clatter! Doot hear?"

And the two last words, shouted in a bullying fashion, usually at Anne, made the family wince with hate of the man.

He was shut out from all family affairs. No one told him anything. The children, alone with their mother, told her all about the day's happenings, everything. Nothing had really taken place in the house until it was told to their mother. But as soon as the father came in, everything stopped. He was like the witch in the woods, happy machinery of the house. And he was always aware of the full influence on his money, the shutting off of life, the unwellness. But now it was gone too far to alter.

He would dearly have liked the children to talk to him, but they could not. Sometimes Mrs. Morel would say:

"You ought to tell your father."

Paul was a prize in a competition in a child's paper. Everybody was highly pleased.

"Now you'd better tell your father when he comes in," said Mrs. Morel. "You know how he carries on and says he's never told anything."

"All right," said Paul. But he would almost rather have forfeited the prize than have to tell his father.

"I've won a prize in a competition, dad," he said.

Mrs. Morel turned round to him.

"Have you, my boy? What sort of a competition?"

"Oh, nothing—about famous women."

"And how much is the prize, then, as you've got?"

"It's a book."

"Oh, indeed?"

"About birds."

"Hum-hum!"

And that was all. Conversation was impossible between the father and any other member of the family. He was an outsider. He had denied the God in him.

The only times when he entered again into the life of his own people was when he worked, and was happy at work. Sometimes, in the evening, he polished the horns or mended the horns or his pitchforks. Then he always wanted several apprentices, and the children enjoyed it. They sat with him in the work, as the actual doing of something, when he was his real self again.

He was a good workman, dexterous, and one who, when he was in a good humour, always sang. He had whole periods, months almost years, of fits and ratty temper. Then sometimes he was jolly again. It was nice to see him run with a piece of red-hot iron into the anvilery, crying:

"Out of my road—out of my road!"

Then he hammered the soft, red-glowing stuff on his anvil green, and made the shape he wanted. Or he sat absorbed for a moment, soldering. Then the children watched with joy as the metal work suddenly softened, and was shaped about again: the nose of the soldering-iron, while the room was full of a scent of burnt resin and hot tin, and Mord was silent and intent for a minute. He always sang when he mended boots because of the jolly sound of hammering. And he was rather happy when he sat putting great patches on his mother's pit trousers, which he would often do, considering them too dirty, and the stuff too hard, for his wife to mend.

But the best time for the young children was when he made shoes. Mord heeled a sheet of iron, sawed wheat-straw from the attic. Then he cleaned with his hand, till each one gleamed like a scale of gold, after which he cut the straw into lengths of about six inches, leaving, if he could, a notch at the bottom of each piece. He always had a beautifully sharp knife that could cut a straw clean without hurting it. Then he sat in the middle of the table a heap of gunpowder, a little pile of black grease upon the white-crushed board. He made and mended the straw while Paul and Annie filled and plugged them. Paul loved to see the black grease trickle down a track in his palm into the mouth of the straw, peppering jolly downwards till the straw was full. Then he heaped up the straw with a bit of soap—which he got on his thumb-nail from a pot in a corner—and the straw was finished.

"Look, dad!" he said.

"That's right, my beauty," replied Mord, who was peculiarly Irish of endearment to his second son. Paul popped the last into the powder-tray, ready for the morning, when Mord would take it to the pot, and use it to fix a shoe that would last the real done.

Monsieur Arthur, still fond of his father, would lean on the arm of Mord's chair, and say:

"Tell us about down pat, daddy."

Then Mord loved to do.

"Well, there's one little 'ow—we call 'im Telly," he would begin. "An' he's a funny one."

Moved had a warm way of telling a story. His words can feel Taff's cunning.

"He's a wicked one," he would sneer, "an' not very high. Well he coves 't' th' stall wi' a couple, an' then he 'cos 'em worse."

"Ella, Taff, you say, 'what art wease' he? Ell' th'cos' some weff'?"

"An' 't wease' again. Then he shows up an' shows 'is 'ead on yee, that's all!"

"What's went, Taff? y' say?"

"And what does he?" Arline always asked.

"He wants a bit o' bacon, my darkey."

The story of Taff would go on immediately, and everybody loved it.

On sometimes it was a new tale.

"An' what does think, my darkey? When I went to put me coat on at nap-time, what should go wrong? up my arm but a mouse."

"Hee up, there! 't I shows."

"An' I was just in time to get 'im by th' tail."

"And did you kill it?"

"I did, for they're a nuisance. The place is full o'ed wi' 'em."

"An' what do they live on?"

"The corn an' the 'weat drops—an' they'll get in your pocket an' eat your soap, if you'll let 'em—no matter where y'e hang your coat—the shirt, 'nibbles' little nuisances, for they are."

These happy evenings could not take place unless Moved had some job to do. And that he always went to bed very early, often before the children. There was nothing compelling for him to stay up for, when he had finished staking, and had scanned the headlines of the newspaper.

And the children lie awake when their father was in bed. They lay and talked softly to each other. Then they started as the lights went suddenly spreading over the ceiling from the lamps that swung in the hands of the rollers tramping by outside, going to take the nine o'clock train. They listened to the rumors of the moon, laughed their sleeping selves into the dark valley. Sometimes they went to the window and watched the stars or four lamps growing fiercer and fiercer, pouring down the hills in the darkness. Then it was a joy to rush back to bed and cuddle closely in the warmth.

Paul was rather a delicate boy, subject to bronchitis. The others were all quite strong, so that was another reason for his mother's difference in feeling for him. One day he came home at dinner-time feeling ill. That it was not a fluency to make any fuss.

"What's the matter with you?" his mother asked sharply.

"Nothing," he replied.

But he ate no dinner.

"If you eat no dinner, you're not going to school," she said.

"Why?" he asked.

"That's why."

So after dinner he lay down on the sofa, as the women always quizzed the children loved. Then he fell into a level of sleep. That afternoon Mrs. Morel was weeding. She listened to the small, restless pulse the boy gave in his throat, as she worked. Again rose in her heart the old, almost weary feeling towards him. She had never expected him to last. And yet he had a great elasticity in his young body. Perhaps it would have been a little relief to her if he had died. She always felt a mixture of anguish in her love for him.

He, in his semi-conscious sleep, was vaguely aware of the clatter of the iron on the iron-stand, of the faint thud, thud on the window-board. Once roused, he opened his eyes to see his mother standing on the hearthrug with the hot iron near her cheek, twisting, as it were, to the heat. Her still face, with the mouth closed tight from suffering and chafusion and self-denial, and her nose the smallest bit on one side, and her blue eyes so young, quick, and warm, made his heart contract with love. When she was quiet so, she looked brave and rich with life, but as if she had been done out of her rights. It hurt the boy badly, this feeling about her that she had never had her life's fulfilment: and his own incapacity to make up to her heart how much a sense of importance, yet made him positively dropped made. It was his childish sin.

She spat on the iron, and a little ball of spit bounded, rose off the dark, glossy surface. Then, twisting, she rubbed the iron on the sack lining of the hearthrug vigorously. She was warm in the rainy feelings. Paul loved the way she coughed and put her head on one side. Her movements were light and quick. It was almost a pleasure to watch her. Nothing she ever did, no movements she ever made, could have been found fault with by her children. The room was warm and full of the scent of hot flues. Later on the daydream came and talked softly with her.

Paul was laid up with an attack of bronchitis. He did not mind much. What happened happened, and it was no good looking against the odds. He loved the evenings, after eight o'clock, when the light was put out, and he could watch the fire-flames spring over the darkness of the walls and ceiling, could watch huge shadows waving and rising, till the room seemed full of men who battled silently.

On coming to bed, the father would come into the bed-room

He was always very gentle if anyone were ill. But he disturbed the atmosphere for the boy.

"Are we asleep, my darling?" Moeri asked softly.

"May a my mother come?"

"She's just finished! Sister! the clothes. Do you want anything?" Moeri nearly "died" his son.

"I don't want nothing. But how long will she be?"

"Not long, my darling."

The father waited understandingly on the hearth for a moment or two. He felt his son did not want him. Then he went to the top of the room and read to his wife.

"This child's aunt! for thee, how long art you to be?"

"Until I've finished, good gracious! Tell him to go to sleep."

"She says you're to go to sleep," the father repeated gently to Paul.

"Well, I want her to come," wanted the boy.

"She says he can't go off till you come," Moeri called downstairs.

"Oh, dear! I shan't be long. And do stop showing downstairs. There's the other children——"

Then Moeri came again, and crouched before the bedroom fire. He loved a fire dearly.

"She says she won't be long," he said.

He looked about indifferently. The boy began to get nervous with irritation. His father's presence seemed so oppressive all his sick experience. At last Moeri, after having stood looking at his boy awhile, said softly:

"Good-night, my darling."

"Good-night," Paul replied, turning round in relief to be alone.

Paul loved to sleep with his mother. Sleep is still more perfect, in spite of hypnosis, when it is shared with a beloved. The warmth, the security and peace of soul, the inner comfort from the touch of the other, lead to the sleep, so that it takes the body and soul completely in its holding. Paul lay against her and slept, and got braver; while she, always a bad sleeper, fell into on her a profound sleep that seemed to give her back.

In consciousness he would sit up in bed, see the dusky home looking at the tundra in the field, scattering their hay on the trodden yellow snow; watch the minuscule troop home—small, black figures trailing slowly in gangs across the white field. Then the night came up in dark blue vapour from the north.

In consciousness everything was wonderful. The moonlight, suddenly arriving on the window-pane, changed there a moment. The moonlight, then were gone, and a deep of water was standing

down the glass. The snowflakes whirled round the corner of the house, like pigeons dashing by. Away across the valley the little black trout crawled doubtfully over the great whiteness.

While they were so poor, the children were delighted if they could do anything to help economically. Annie and Paul and Arthur went out early in the morning, in summer, looking for mushrooms, hurrying through the wet grass, from which the larks were rising, for the white-skinned, wonderful naked toadstools crouched secretly in the grass. And if they got half a pound they felt tremendously happy: there was the joy of finding something, the joy of accepting something straight from the hand of Nature, and the joy of contributing to the family exchange.

But the most important harvest, after gleaming for thimblefuls, was the blackberries. Mrs. Morel must buy fruit for puddings on the Saturdays; also she liked blackberries. So Paul and Arthur scoured the coppices and woods and old quarries, as long as a blackberry was to be found, every week-end going on their search. In that region of mining villages blackberries became a comparative rarity. But Paul hunted far and wide. He loved being out in the country, among the bushes. But he also could not bear to go home to his mother empty. That, he felt, would disappoint her, and he would have died rather.

"Good gracious!" she would exclaim as the lads came in, late, and tired to death, and hungry, "wherever have you been?"

"Well," replied Paul, "there wasn't any, so we went over Miah Hill. And look here, our mother!"

He popped into the basket.

"Now, there are five owt!" she exclaimed.

"And there's over two pounds—ain't there over two pounds?"

She wiped the basket.

"Yis," she answered doubtfully.

Then Paul filled out a little spray. He always brought her one spray, the best he could find.

"Pretty?" she said, in a common tone, of a woman accepting a invitation.

The boy walked all day, went miles and miles, rather than own himself beaten and come home to her empty-handed. She never realized this, while he was young. She was a woman who waited for her children to grow up. And William occupied her chiefly.

But when William went to Nottingham, and was not so much at home, the mother made a companion of Paul. The latter was unconsciously jealous of his brother, and William was jealous of him. At the same time, they were good friends.



Mrs. More's intimacy with her second son was more subtle and fine, perhaps not so passionate as with her eldest. It was the rule that Paul should fetch the money on Friday afternoon. The salaries of the five men were paid on Fridays, but not individually. All the earnings of each man were put down in the chief book, as contractor, and he divided the wages again, either at the public-house or in his own house. So that the children could fetch the money, without slow work on Friday afternoon. Each of the More children—William then Annie, then Paul—had fetched the money on Friday afternoon, until they were themselves to work. Paul used to set off at half-past three, with a little cotton bag in his pocket. Down all the paths, women, girls, children, and men were seen trooping to the office.

Three offices were quite handsome: a new, red-brick building, almost like a mansion, standing in its own well-kept grounds at the end of Greenhill Lane. The waiting room was the best, a long, bare room paved with blue brick, and having a seat all round, against the wall. Here sat the colliers in their jackets. They had come up early. The women and children usually loitered about on the red gravel paths. Paul always examined the grass border, and the big grass bank, because it is a good busy place and they forget-me-nots. There was a crowd of many voices. The women had on their Sunday hats. The girls clustered together. Little dogs ran here and there. The green streets were silent all around.

Then from inside came the cry "Sparrow Park—Sparrow Park." All the folk for Sparrow Park trooped inside. When it was time for Drury to be paid, Paul went in among the crowd. The pay-room was quite small. A counter went across, dividing it into half. Behind the counter stood two men—Mr. Brathwaite and his clerk, Mr. Winterbottom. Mr. Brathwaite was large, somewhat of the same patriarch in appearance, having a rather thin white beard. He was usually cruffed in an enormous silk necktie, and right up to the last summer a huge fire burned in the open grate. His window was open. Sometimes in winter the air scorched the throats of the people, coming in from the firehouse. Mr. Winterbottom was rather small and fat, and very bald. His mouth reminded that were not wide, whilst his chest launched forth patriarchal admonitions against the colliers.

The room was crowded with men in their jackets, men who had been home and changed, and women, and one or two children, and usually a dog. Paul was quite small, so it was often his fate to be jammed behind the legs of the men, near the fire which scorched him. He knew the order of the counter—they were according to stall number.

"Holiday," came the ringing voice of Mr. Brackwate. Then Mrs. Holiday stepped slowly forward, was paid, drew aside.

"Bower—John Bower."

A boy stepped to the counter, Mr. Brackwate, large and insensible, gazed at him over his spectacles.

"John Bower?" he repeated.

"He's not," said the boy.

"Why, you need to 'ave a different nose than that," said gloomy Mr. Winterbottom, peering over the counter. The people turned staring at John Bower senior.

"How is it your father's not come?" said Mr. Brackwate, in a large and magnate's voice.

"He's badly," piped the boy.

"You should tell him to keep off the drink," pronounced the great cashier.

"An' never mind if he puts his foot through yer," said a mocking voice from behind.

All the men laughed. The large and important cashier looked down at his seat above.

"Fred Filington?" he called, quite indifferently.

Mr. Brackwate was an important shareholder in the firm.

Fred knew his turn was next but one, and his heart began to beat. He was pushed against the chimney-piece. His calves were burning. But he did not hope to get through the wall of men.

"Walter Morel!" came the ringing voice.

"Here!" piped Fred, small and inadequate.

"Morel—Walter Morel!" the cashier repeated, his finger and thumb on the tickets, ready to pass on.

Fred was suffering convulsions of self-consciousness, and could not or would not shout. The backs of the men obliterated him. Then Mr. Winterbottom came to the rescue.

"He's here. Where is he? Morel's lad?"

The fat, red, bald little man peered round with keen eyes. He gazed at the fireplace. The collar looked round, moved aside, and disclosed the face.

"Here he is!" said Mr. Winterbottom.

Fred went to the counter.

"Seventeen pounds eleven and threepence. Why don't you shout up what you're called?" said Mr. Brackwate. He banged on to the receipt a five-pound bag of silver, then, in a delicate and partly movement, picked up a little ten-pound volume of gold, and plumped it beside the silver. The gold did in a bright stream over the paper. The cashier finished counting off the money; the

boy dragged the whole down the counter to Mr. Winterbottom, to whom the muggings for rent and such must be paid. Here he refused again.

"Fifteen an' six," said Mr. Winterbottom.

The lad was too much upset to count. He pushed forward some loose silver and half a sovereign.

"How much do you think you've given me?" asked Mr. Winterbottom.

The boy looked at him, but said nothing. He had not the slightest notion.

"Haven't you got a tongue in your head?"

Paul bit his lip, and pushed forward some more silver.

"Don't they teach you to count at the Board-school?" he asked.

"Nought by Alghiths an' French," said a collier.

"An' clock an' impudent," said another.

Paul was keeping someone waiting. With trembling fingers he got his money into the bag and slid out. He suffered the vicissitudes of the damned on these occasions.

He relaxed, when he got outside, and was waiting along the Mansfield Road, was infinite. On the park wall the mosses were green. There were some gold and some white flowers peeping under the apple-trees of an orchard. The colliers were walking home in a stream. The boy went near the wall self-consciously. He knew many of the men, but could not recognise them as their class. And that was a new feature to him.

When he got down to the New Inn, at Bovey, his father was not yet come. Mrs. Wharmby, the landlady, knew him. His grandmother, Mabel's mother, had been Mrs. Wharmby's friend.

"Your father's not come yet," said the landlady, in the peculiar half-compassed, half-patronising voice of a woman who talks chiefly to grown men. "Be you down?"

Paul sat down on the edge of the bench in the bar. Some colliers were "reckoning"—sharing out their money—in a corner; others came in. They all glanced at the boy without speaking. At last Mabel came—hale, and with something of an air, even in her blackness.

"Hello!" he said rather tenderly to his step. "Have you beened me? Shall you have a drink of something?"

Paul and all the children were bred up from anti-alcoholism, and would have suffered more in drinking a lemonade before all the men than in having a tooth drawn.

The landlady looked at him *de haut en bas*, rather pitying, and at the same time, suspecting his class, farce morality. Paul went home, glowing. He entered the house silently. Friday was

making day, and there was usually a hot bath. His mother put it before him.

Suddenly he turned on her in a fury, his eyes flashing.

"I'm not going to the office any more," he said.

"Why, what's the matter?" his mother asked in surprise. Her sudden anger rather amazed her.

"I'm not going any more," he declared.

"Oh, very well, tell your father so."

He closed his door as if he hated it.

"I'm not—I'm not going to fetch the money."

"Then one of Charles's children can go; they'd be glad enough of the money," said Mrs. Morel.

The suggestion was Paul's only answer. It merely went in, buying birthday presents; but it was an income, and he remained it. But—

"They can have it, then!" he said. "I don't want it."

"Oh, very well," said his mother. "But you can't tell us about it."

"They're hateful, and cunning, and hateful, they are, and I'm not going any more. Mr. Bachelard drops his 'b's', and Mr. Winterbottom says 'You was'."

"And is that why you won't go any more?" asked Mrs. Morel.

The boy was silent for some time. His face was pale, his eyes dark and ferocious. His mother moved about at her work, telling no notice of him.

"They always stand in front of me, so I can't get out," he said.

"Well, my lad, you've only to ask them," she replied.

"And then Alfred Winterbottom says, 'What do they teach you in the board-school?'"

"They never taught him much," said Mrs. Morel. "that is a fact—neither manners nor wit—and his cunning he was born with."

So, in her own way, she comforted him. His ridiculous hyper-sensitiveness made her lower self. And sometimes the fury of his eyes stared her, made her sleeping soul lift up in head a moment, surprised.

"What was the cheque?" she asked.

"Seventeen pounds eleven and fivepence, and sixteen and six stoppage," replied the boy. "It's a good week, and only five shillings stoppage for my father."

So she was able to calculate how much her husband had earned, and could call him to account if he gave her short money. Morel always kept to himself the secret of the week's account.

Friday was the looking night and market night. It was the rule

that Paul should stay at home and bake. He loved to roop in and draw or read, he was very fond of drawing. Anne chooses "galloved" on Friday nights. Arthur was enjoying himself as usual. So the boy remained alone.

Mrs. Moor loved her marketing. In the tiny market-place on the top of the hill, where four roads, from Nottingham and Derby, Gileston and Mansfield, meet, many stalls were set out. Bakers ran in from surrounding villages. The market-place was full of women, the streets packed with men. It was amusing to see so many men everywhere in this quiet. Mrs. Moor usually quarrelled with her late women, sympathized with her first man—who was a pakee, but his wife was a bad un-laughed with the fish man—who was a strong but no-doubt—put the fishman man in his place, was cold with the odd-ways man, and only went to the crockery man when she was driven—by the crockery man to a little dish—than she was coldly polite.

"I wondered how much that little dish was," she said.

"Becomes to you."

"Thank-you."

She put the dish down and walked away, but she could not leave the market-place without it. Again she went by where the pot was sitting on the floor, and she glanced at the dish slowly, pretending not to.

She was a little woman, in a bonnet and a black costume. Her bonnet was in its third year; it was a great grievance to Anne.

"Mother! the girl implied, "don't wear that ruddy little bonnet."

"Then what else shall I wear," replied the mother tartly. "And I'm sure it's right enough."

It had started with a top; then had had flowers; now was reduced to black lace and a bit of jet.

"It looks rather come down," said Paul. "Couldn't you give it a pick-up-up?"

"I'll twist your head for impudence," said Mrs. Moor, and she used the strings of the black bonnet violently under her chin.

She glanced at the dish again. Both she and her enemy, the pot man, had an uncomfortable feeling, as if there were something between them. Suddenly he shouted:

"Do you want it for fivepence?"

She started. Her heart hardened; but then she stooped and took up her dish.

"I'll have it," she said.

"You'll do me the favour, like?" he said. "You'd better spit in it, like you do when you've something give you."

Miss Moral paid him the forgiveness in a cold manner.

"I don't ask you give it me," she said. "You wouldn't let me have it for forgiveness if you didn't want to."

"In this business, scardin' place you may count yourself lucky if you can give your things away," he growled.

"You, there are bad times, and good," said Miss Moral.

But she had forgiven the poor man. They were friends. She drew now finger his coat. So she was happy.

Paul was waiting for her. He loved her home-caring. She was always her best co-ventruephant, read, laden with parcels, fishing men in spirit. He heard her quick, light step in the entry and looked up from his drawing.

"Oh!" she sighed, smiling at him from the doorway.

"My word, you are loaded!" he exclaimed, putting down his brush.

"I am!" she gasped. "That housewife Anna said she'd meet me back a weight!"

She dropped her string bag and her packages on the table.

"Is the bread done?" she asked, going to the oven.

"The last one is cooking," he replied. "You needn't look, I've not forgotten it."

"Oh, that poor man!" she said, closing the oven door. "You know what a stretch I've said he was? Well, I don't think he's quite so bad."

"Doesn't you?"

The boy was attentive to her. She took off her little black bonnet.

"No. I think he can't make any money—well, it's everybody's cry alike nowadays—and it makes him disagreeable."

"It would not," said Paul.

"Well, one can't wonder at it. And he let me have—how much do you think he let me have this for?"

She took the dish out of its rag of newspaper, and stared looking at it with joy.

"Show me!" said Paul.

She ran round together glowing over the dish.

"I see cornflowers on them," said Paul.

"Yes, and I thought of the napies you bought me——"

"One and three," said Paul.

"Fifteen?"

"It's not enough, another."

"No. Do you know, I fairly washed off with it. But I'd been mismanaging, I couldn't afford any more. And he needn't have let me have it if he hadn't wanted to."

"No, he needs 's, need he," said Paul, and the two comforted each other from the fear of having rubbed the pot man.

"We c'n have sweet fruit in it," said Paul.

"Or custard, or a jelly," said his mother.

"Or radishes and butter," said he.

"Don't forget that bread," she said, her voice bright with glad.

Paul looked in the oven, tapped the loaf on the hearth.

"It's done," he said, giving it to her.

She tapped it also.

"Yes," she replied, going to unpack her bag. "Oh, and I'm a wicked, extravagant woman. I know I c'll come to want."

He hopped to her side eagerly, to see her latest extravagance. She unfolded another lump of newspaper and disclosed some more of painted and of cretonne dresses.

"Four pairs' worth?" she counted.

"How cheap!" he cried.

"Yes, but I couldn't afford it this week of all weeks."

"But lovely!" he cried.

"Aren't they?" she exclaimed, giving way to pure joy. "Paul, look at this yellow one, isn't it—and a dress just like my old one!"

"Just!" cried Paul, stooping to sniff. "And smells just nice! But he's a bit splashed."

He ran to the scullery, came back with the faucet, and carefully washed the party.

"Now look at him, now he's wet!" he said.

"Yes!" she exclaimed, breathful of resolution.

The children at length found this quarter. At the end where the Morde lived there were not many young things. So the few were more united. Boys and girls played together, the girls joining in the fights and the rough games, the boys taking part in the dancing games and raps and make-belief of the girls.

Anna and Paul and Arthur loved the winter evenings, when it was not wet. They stayed indoors till the candles were all gone home, till it was dark dark, and the street would be deserted. Then they sat close around their beds, for they scorned covers, as all the cotton children did, and went out. The night was very dark, and at the end the whole great night opened out, as a hollow, with a little couple of light below where Milner got lay, and another for sleep opposite for Jolly. The furthest very light seemed to stretch out the darkness for ever. The children looked anxiously down the road to the one lamp-post, which stood at the end of the field path. If the little, human space were cleared, the two boys felt growing desolation. They stood with their hands in their pockets under the lamp, turning their backs

on the night, quite mysteriously, watching the dark houses. Suddenly, a pinelore under a short coat was seen, and a long-legged girl came flying up.

"Where's Billy Filkins an' poor Annie an' Eddie Dolan?"

"I don't know."

But it did not matter so much—there were three now. They set up a game round the lamp-post, till the stars raked up, yelling. Then the play went fast and furious.

There was only this one lamp-post. Behind was the great sweep of darkness, as if all the night were there. In front, another sweep, dark way opened over the hill town. Occasionally somebody came out of this way and went into the field down the path. In a dozen yards thought had swallowed them. The children played on.

They were brought exceedingly close together seeing so these isolation. If a quarrel took place, the whole play was spent. Arthur was very touchy, and Billy Filkins—really Filkins—was worse. Then Paul had to side with Arthur, and as Paul's side went Allen, while Billy Filkins always had Erasmus Lamb and Eddie Dolan to back him up. Then the six would fight, hate with a fury of hatred, and flee home in terror. Paul never forgets, after one of these fierce instantaneous fights, seeing a big red moon lift itself up, slowly, between the wires road over the hill-top, steadily, like a great back. And he thought of the Bible, that the moon should be turned to blood. And the next day he made haste to be friends with Billy Filkins. And then the wild, intense games went on again under the lamp-post, surrounded by so much darkness. His blood, going into his parlour, would hear the children singing away.

"My shoes are made of Spanish leather,  
My socks are made of silk;  
I wear a ring on every finger,  
I wash myself in milk."

They sounded so perfectly absorbed in the game as their voices came out of the night, that they had the feel of wild creatures singing. It moved the mother; and she understood when they came in at eight o'clock, ruddy, with brilliant eyes, and quick, passionate speech.

They all loved the Scargill Street house for its openness, for the great sweep of the world it had in view. On summer evenings the women would stand against the field fence, gossiping, being the west, watching the sunset flare quickly west, till the Derbyshire hills ridged across the cinema for a way, like the black crest of a coat.



In this summer season the pils never turned full down, particularly the soft coal. Mrs. Dalis, who lived next door to Mrs. Mord, going to the field house to shake her lunch-bag, would spy men coming slowly up the hill. She saw as many as three collars. Then she waited, a tall, thin, shrew-faced woman, standing on the hill brow, almost like a statue to the poor collars who were triling up. It was only eleven o'clock. From the far-off wooded hills the haze that hangs like fine black crops at the back of a summer morning had not yet dissipated. The first man came to the top. "Chuckle-chuck!" went the pile under his throat.

"What, han' yer knoodled off?" cried Mrs. Dalis.

"My han' knoodled."

"It's a pity as they lett yer go," she said mechanically.

"It is that," replied the man.

"Nay, you know you're fig to come up again," she said.

And the man went on. Mrs. Dalis, going up her yard, eyed Mrs. Mord taking the wheel to the sub-pla.

"I reckon Mord's knoodled off, rouse," she cried.

"Is't a dilemma?" exclaimed Mrs. Mord in wrath.

"Ha! But I've just seed Jont Hurdley."

"They might as well have arved their shoul-ladders," said Mrs. Mord. And both women went solemnly disgusted.

The collars, dark from scarcely blackened, were tramping home again. Mord hated to go back. He loved the sunny morning. But he had gone to get to work, and to be sent home again spoilt his temper.

"Good gracious, at this time!" exclaimed his wife, as he entered.

"Can I help it, woman?" he shouted.

"And I've not done half enough dinner."

"Then I'll eat my bit o' snap as I cook with you," he howled pathetically. He felt apoplectic and sore.

And the children, coming home from school, would wonder to see their father eating with his dinner the two shillat slices of rather dry and dirty bread and butter that had been to go and back.

"What's my dad eating his snap for now?" asked Arthur.

"I should ha'e it hotted as me if I didna," snarled Mord.

"What a story!" exclaimed his wife.

"As't it a pile' as he wanted?" said Mord. "I'm not such an extravagant mortal as you be, with your waste. If I drop a bit of bread as pil, or all the dum an' dum, I pick it up an' eat it."

"The mice would eat it," said Paul. "It wouldn't be wasted."

"Good bread an' butter's not for mice, either," said Mord.

"Dirty or not dirty, I'd eat it rather than it should be wasted."

"You might have it for the price and pay for it out of your next pay," said Mrs. Morel.

"Oh, might I?" he exclaimed.

They were very poor that autumn. William had just gone away to London, and his mother needed his money. He sent her shillings once or twice, but he had many things to pay for at first. His letters came regularly once a week. He wrote a good deal to his mother, telling her all his life, how he made friends, and was exchanging houses with a Frenchman, how he enjoyed London. His mother felt again he was returning to her just as when he was at home. She wrote to him every week her direct, rather wistful letters. All day long, as she cleaned the house, she thought of him. He was in London: he would do well. And as he was like her knight who was her favour in the battle.

He was coming at Christmas for five days. There had never been such preparations. Paul and Arthur covered the land for holly and evergreen. Anne made the pretty paper hoops in the old-fashioned way. And there was a shower of evergreens in the garden. Mrs. Morel made a big and magnificent cake. Then, feeling queerly, she showed Paul how to blanch almonds. He sliced the long nuts carefully, counting them all, to see how one was lost. It was said that eggs whisked better in a cold place. So she lay mood in the scullery, where the temperature was nearly at freezing-point, and whisked and whisked, and flew in excitement to his mother as the white of egg gave softer and more snowy.

"Just look, mother! Isn't it lovely?"

And he balanced a bit on his toes, then blew it in the air.

"Now, don't waste it," said the mother.

Everybody was used with excitement. William was coming on Christmas Eve. Mrs. Morel surveyed her pantry. There was a big plum cake, and a rice cake, jam tarts, lemon tarts, and mince-pies—two enormous dishes. She was finishing cooking—Spanish tarts and cheese-cakes. Everywhere was decorated. The dining-bureau of holly hung with bright and glowing things, upon dusty shelves Mrs. Morel's head as she dressed her little tarts in the kitchen. A great fire roared. There was a scent of baked pastry. He was due at seven o'clock, but he would be late. The three children had gone to meet him. She was alone. But at a quarter to seven Morel came in again. Neither wife nor husband spoke. He sat in his armchair, quite backward with unwillingness, and she quietly went on with her baking. Only by the careful way in which she did things could it be told how much moved she was. The clock ticked on.

"What time does my father's coming?" Mabel asked for the fifth time.

"The train gets in at half-past six," she replied emphatically.

"Then he'll be here at two past seven."

"Oh, bless you, it'll be hours late on the Midland," she said indifferently. But she hoped, by expressing her late to being late early, Mabel would dash the entry to look for him. Then he came back.

"Goodness, mind!" she said. "You're like an ill-timed hen."

"Hadn't you better be getting' him somehow t' not squab!" asked the father.

"There's plenty of time," she answered.

"There's not so much as I can tell ya," he admitted, turning crossly in his chair. She began to clear her table. The kettle was singing. They waited and waited.

Meanwhile the three children were on the platform at Goshley Bridge, on the Midland main line, two miles from home. They waited one hour. A train came—he was not there. Down the line the red and green lights shone. It was very dark and very cold.

"Ask him if the London train's come," said Paul to Annie, when they saw the man in a top cap.

"I'm not," said Annie. "You be quiet—he might send us off."

But Paul was dying for the man to know they were expecting someone by the London train: it sounded so grand. Yet he was much too much scared of touching any man, let alone one in a peaked cap, to dare to ask. The three children could scarcely go into the waiting-room for fear of being sent away, and for fear something should happen while they were off the platform. Still they waited in the dark and cold.

"It's an hour and a half late," said Arthur impatiently.

"Well," said Annie, "it's Christmas Eve."

They all grew silent. He wasn't coming. They looked down the darkness of the railway. There was London! It seemed the uttermost of distance. They thought anything might happen if one came from London. They were all too troubled to talk. Cold, and unhappy, and alone, they huddled together on the platform.

At last, after more than two hours, they saw the lights of an engine pattering round, away down the darkness. A porter ran out. The children drew back with beating hearts. A great train halted for Manchester, drew up. Two doors opened, and from one of them, William. They flew to him. He handed parcels to them cheerily, and immediately began to explain that this great train

had stopped for his sake at such a small station as Seaford Bridge. It was not needed to stop.

Meanwhile the parson was getting nervous. The table was set, the chop was cooked, everything was ready. Miss Mabel put on her black apron. She was waiting for her best dress. Then she sat, pretending to read. The minutes were a torture to her.

"Hush!" said Mabel. "It's as long as 'a ha'nd."

"And three children waiting!" she said.

"Th' more cause for 'em to be," he said.

"I tell you, no Christmas Eve they're dear wrong!"

They were both a bit cross with each other, so gnawed with anxiety. The air-cast moaned outside in a cold, raw wind. And all that space of night from London hanged Miss Mabel suffered. The slight click of the works inside the clock irritated her. "I was getting so late," it was getting unbearable.

At last there was a sound of voices, and a footstep in the entry.

"He's here!" cried Mabel, jumping up.

Then he stood back. The mother ran a few steps towards the door and waited. There was a rush and a patter of feet, the door burst open. William was there. He dropped his Gladstone bag and took his mother in his arms.

"Mum!" he said.

"My boy!" she cried.

And for two seconds, no longer, she clasped him and kissed him. Then she withdrew and said, trying to be quite normal—

"But how late you are!"

"Ayen't I?" he cried, turning to his father. "Well, dad?"

The two men shook hands.

"Well, my lad!"

Mabel's eyes were wet.

"We thought she'd never be coming!" he said.

"Oh, I'd come!" exclaimed William.

Then the son turned round to his mother.

"But you look well," she said pettily, laughing.

"Well!" he exclaimed. "I should think so—coming home!"

He was a fine fellow, big, straight, and fourteen-looking. He looked round at the congress and the living bunch, and the little table that lay in their line on the hearth.

"By Jove! mother, it's not different!" he said, as if in relief.

Everybody was still for a second. Then he suddenly sprang forward, picked a card from the hearth, and pushed it whole into his mouth.

"Well, did I see you not such a parish oven!" the father exclaimed.

He had brought them endless presents. Every penny he had he had spent on them. There was a sense of luxury overflowing in the house. For his mother there was an umbrella with gold on the pale handle. She kept it to her dying day, and would have lost anything rather than that. Everybody had something gorgeous, and besides, there were pounds of unknown wares: Turkish delights, crystallized pineapple, and such-like things which, the children thought, only the splendour of London could provide. And Paul boasted of these wares among his friends.

"Real pineapple, cut off in slices, and then turned into crystal—like glass!"

Everybody was read with happiness in the family. Home was home, and they loved it with a passion of love, whatever the suffering had been. There were parties, there were rejoicings. People came in to see William, to see what difference London had made to him. And they all found him "such a gentleman, and not a flash fellow, my word!"

When he went away again the children retired to various places to weep alone. Moral went so bad as misery, and Mrs. Moral felt as if she were numbed by some drug, as if her feelings were paralyzed. She loved him passionately.

He was in the office of a lawyer connected with a large shipping firm, and at the midnight his chief offered him a trip on the Mediterranean on one of the boats, for quite a small crew. Mrs. Moral wrote: "Go, go, my boy. You may never have a chance again, and I should lose to think of you cruising there in the Mediterranean almost before than to have you at home." But William came home for his fortnight's holiday. Not even the Mediterranean, which pulled at all his young man's desire to travel, and at his poor man's wonder at the glamorous south, could take him away when he might come home. That compensated his mother for much.

*Paul Loucher into Life*

MORAL was rather a headless man, careless of decency. So he had random accidents. Now, when Mrs. Moral heard the rattle of an empty coal-cart creak at her entry-end, she ran into the parlour to look, expecting almost to see her husband creaked in the waggons, his face grey under his dirt, his body limp and with weak arms bent on either. If it were he, she would run out to help.

About a year after William went to London, and just after Paul had left school, before he got work, Mrs. Moral was upstairs and her son was painting on the kitchen—he was very clever with his hands—when there came a knock at the door. Quickly he put down his brush to go. At the same moment his mother opened a window upstairs and looked down.

A pedlar in his dirt stood on the threshold.

"Is this Walter Moral?" he asked.

"Yes," said Mrs. Moral. "What is it?"

But she had guessed already.

"Your mother's got hurt," he said.

"Oh, dear me!" she exclaimed. "It's a wonder if he hadn't, lad. And what's he done this time?"

"I don't know for sure, but it's 'a big accident. They takin' 'im ter th' 'spital."

"Good gracious me!" she exclaimed. "Oh, dear, what a one he is! There's not five minutes of peace, I'll be hanged if there is! His thumb's nearly better, and now—— Did you see him?"

"I seed him at th' doctors. An' I seed 'em bring 'im up in a tub, an' 'e was in a dead faint. But he showed 'im anythink when Doctor Pinner examined him I th' jump within—an' asked an' asked, an' and as 'e was goin' so he is 'an' whom—'e won't go! ter th' 'spital."

The boy delivered to an end.

"He could want to come home, so that I can have all the bother. Thank you, my lad. Oh, dear, if I'm not sick—sick and perished, I am!"

She came downstairs. Paul had mechanically resumed his painting.

"And it must be pretty bad if they've taken him to the hospital,"

she went on. "But what a splendid creature he is! Other men don't have all these accidents. Yes, he would want to put all the burden on me. Eh, dear, just as we are getting cozy a lot at last. Put those things away, there's no time to be pointing ears. What time is there a train?" I know I'll have to go trailing to Kanton. I'll have to leave that bedroom."

"I can finish it," said Paul.

"You needn't. I shall catch the seven o'clock bus, I should think. Oh, my blessed heart, the fire and commotion he'll make! And those granite sets at Tunder Hill—the night will call them railway patibles—they'll jolt him almost to bits. I wonder why they can't move them, the more they're in, not all the men at go serve in that ambulance. You'd think they'd have a hospital here. The man bought the ground, and, my dear, there'd be accidents enough to keep it going. But no, they must wait there, ten miles in a slow ambulance to Nottingham. It's a crying shame! Oh, and the fun he'll make! I know he will. I wonder what with him. Taster, I'd think. Poor beggar, he'll wait himself anywhere rather. But he'll look after him, I know. Now there's no telling how long he'll be stuck in that hospital—and won't he hate it? But if it's only his leg it's not so bad."

All the time she was getting ready, Humbly taking off her bodice, she crooked at the boiler while the water ran slowly into her bedpan-pan.

"I wish this boiler was at the bottom of the sea!" she exclaimed, wriggling the handle impatiently. She had very handsome, strong arms, rather surprising on a smallish woman.

Paul cleared away, put on the kettle, and set the table.

"There isn't a train till four-twenty," he said. "You've time enough."

"Oh no I haven't!" she cried, blinking at him over the towel as she wiped her face.

"Yes you have. You must drink a cup of tea at any rate. Should I come with you to Kanton?"

"Come with me? What for, I should like to know? Now, what have I to take him? Eh, dear! His chest there—and it's a blessing it is clean. But it had better be aired. And stockings—he won't want them—and a towel, I suppose; and handkerchiefs. Now what else?"

"A comb, a knife and fork and spoon," said Paul. His father had been in hospital before.

"Goodness knows what sort of state his feet were in," continued Mrs. Mew, as she combed her long brown hair, that was flat to silk, and was touched now with grey. "He's very particular to

wink himself to the wall, but before he shuts down's nose, that there, I suppose there are plenty like it."

Paul had laid the table. He cut his mother out or two pieces of more thin bread and butter.

"Here you are," he said, putting her cup of tea in her place.

"I can't be bothered!" she exclaimed crossly.

"Well, you've got to, so there, now it's put out ready," he insisted.

So she sat down and sipped her tea, and ate a loaf, as silent as she was thinking.

In a few minutes she was gone, to walk the two and a half miles to Kenton Station. All the things she was taking home she had in her baggy strong bag. Paul watched her go up the road between the hedges—a little, quick-stepping figure, and his heart ached for her, that she was thrust forward again into pain and trouble. And she, tripping so quickly in her stride, felt at the back of her her son's heart warning her, felt him, bearing what part of the burden he could, even supporting her. And when she was at the hospital, she thought, "It will open that ball when I tell him how bad it is, I'd better be candid." And when she was trudging home again, she felt he was coming to share her burden.

"Is it bad?" asked Paul, as soon as she entered the house.

"It's bad enough," she replied.

"What?"

She righted and sat down, undoing her bonnet-strings. Her son watched her face as it was blind, and her small, work-hardened hands fidgeting at the knee under her chin.

"Well," she answered, "it's not really dangerous, but the nurse says it's a dreadful result. You see, a great piece of rock fell on her hip—here—and it's a complete fracture. There are pieces of bone riding through—"

"Lift—how hard?" exclaimed the children.

"Just," she answered, "of course he says he's going to die—he wouldn't be him if he didn't. 'I'm done for, my son!' he said, looking at me. 'Don't be so silly,' I said to him. 'You're not going to die of a broken leg, however badly it's smashed.' 'I'll give some out of 'em but in a wooden box,' he groaned. 'Well,' I said, 'If you want them to carry you into the garden in a wooden box, when you're home, I've no doubt they will.' 'If we think it's good for him,' said the Sister. 'She's so awfully nice Susan, but rather strict.'"

Mrs. Morel took off her bonnet. The children waited in silence.

"Of course, he is bad," she continued, "and he will be. It's



a great shock, and he's lost a lot of blood, and, of course, it is a very dangerous wound. It's not at all sure that it will mend so quickly. And then there's the fever and the morification—if it naps but wakes he'll quickly be gone. But there, he's a clean-blooded man, with wonderful healing flesh, and so I see no reason why it should take bad ways. Of course there's a wound!"

She was pale now with emotion and anxiety. The three children realized that it was very bad for their father, and the house was silent, somber.

"But he always gets better," said Paul after a while.

"That's what I tell him," said the mother.

Everybody moved about in silence.

"And he really looked nearly done for," she said. "But the doctor says that is the pain."

Annie took away her mother's coat and bonnet.

"And he looked at me when I came away," I said. "I'll have to go now, Walter, because of the nurse—and the children." And he looked at me. It seems hard."

Paul took up his book again and went on painting. Arthur went outside for some coal. Anne sat looking dismal. And Mrs. Mord, in her little rocking chair that her husband had made for her when the first baby was coming, remained motionless, breathing. She was gaunt, and bitterly sorry for the man who was hurt so much. But still, in her heart of hearts, where the love should have burned, there was a blank. Now, when all her woman's pity was roused to its full extent, when she would have saved herself to death to nurse him and to save him, when she would have taken the pain herself, if she could, somewhere far away inside her, she felt indifferent to him and to his suffering. It hurt her most of all, the failure to love him, even when he roused her strong emotions. She brooded awhile.

"And there," she said suddenly, "when I'd got halfway to Kanto, I found I'd come out in my working boots—and look at them." They were an old pair of Paul's, brown and rubbed through at the toes. "I didn't know what to do with myself, for shame," she added.

In the morning, when Annie and Arthur were at school, Mrs. Mord talked again to her son, who was helping her with her housework.

"I found Father at the hospital. He did look bad, poor little fellow." "Yes," I said to him, "what sort of a journey did you have with him?" "Dance as you might," he said. "Ay," I said, "I know what he'd be." "But it was bad for him, Mrs. Mord, is not that?" he said. "I know," I said. "At every job I thought my

'want would he' blown clean out of my mouth,' he said. 'An' the scream 'o' pain sometimes! Mind, not for a minute would I go through wot 'is again.' 'I can quite understand it,' I said. 'It's a nasty job, though,' he said, 'an' one w'll be a long while sleepin' it's right again.' 'I'm afraid it will,' I said. I like Mr. Arthur—I do like him. There's something so manly about him."

Paul resumed his sigh slowly.

"And of course," Mrs. Morel continued, "for a man like your father, the hospital is hard. He can't understand rules and regulations. And he won't let anybody else touch him, not if he can help it. When he smashed the muscles of his thigh, and it had to be dressed four times a day, would he let anybody but me or his mother do it? He wouldn't. So, of course, he'd suffer in there with the nurses. And I didn't like leaving him. I'm sure, when I loved him an' come away, it seemed a shame."

So she talked to her son, almost as if she were thinking aloud to him, and he took it in as best he could, by sharing her trouble to lighten it. And in the end she shared almost everything with him without knowing.

Morel had a very bad time. For a week he was in a mental condition. Then he began to mend. And then, knowing he was going to get better, the whole family sighed with relief, and proceeded to live happily.

They were not badly off while Morel was in the hospital. There were fifteen shillings a week from the pit, ten shillings from the sick club, and five shillings from the Disability Fund; and then every week the ladies had something for Mrs. Morel—five or seven shillings—so that she was quite well to do. And while Morel was progressing favourably in the hospital, the family was unusually happy and peaceful. On Saturdays and Wednesdays Mrs. Morel went to Nottingham to see her husband. Then she always brought back some little thing: a small cube of perfume for Paul, or some thick paper, a couple of postcards for Annie, that the whole family rejoiced over the day before the gift was allowed to send them away; or a fountain for Arthur, or a bit of pretty wood. She described her adventures into the big shops with joy. Soon the bill in the picture-shop bore her, and knew about Paul. The girl in the book-shop took a keen interest in her. Mrs. Morel was full of information when she got home from Nottingham. The day was round till bedtime, laughing, putting in, arguing. Then Paul often asked the fire.

"I'm the man in the house now," he used to say to his mother with joy. They learned how perfectly possible the home could be. And they almost regretted—though none of them would have

owned to rock saltiness—that their father was soon coming back.

Paul was now fourteen, and was looking for work. He was a rather small and rather finely-made boy, with dark brown hair and light blue eyes. His face had already lost its youthful roundness, and was becoming somewhat like Wilbur's—rough-featured, almost rugged—and it was curiously mobile. Usually he looked as if he saw things, was full of life, and warm; then, his smile, like his mother's, came suddenly and was very tremble; and then, when there was any sting in his soul's quick painings, his face went stupid and ugly. He was the sort of boy that becomes a clown and a lost as soon as he is not understood, or feels himself held cheap; and, again, is adorable at the least touch of warmth.

He suffered very much from the first contact with anything. When he was seven, the starting school had been a nightmare and a torture to him. But afterwards he liked it. And now that he felt he had to go out into life, he went through agonies of startling self-consciousness. He was quite a clever painter for a boy of his years, and he knew some French and German and mathematics that Mr. Weston had taught him. But nothing he had was of any commercial value. He was not strong enough for heavy manual work, his mother said. He did not care for making things with his hands, preferred racing about, or making excursions into the country, or reading, or painting.

"What do you want to be?" his mother asked.

"Anything."

"That is no answer," said Mrs. West.

But it was quite truthfully the only answer he could give. His ambition, as far as the world's gear went, was quietly to earn his thirty or thirty-five shillings a week somewhere near home, and then, when his father died, have a cottage with his mother, paint and go out as he liked, and live happy ever after. That was his programme as far as doing things went. But he was proud within himself, measuring people against himself, and placing them, unceasingly. And he thought that perhaps he might also make a painter, the real thing. But that he felt alone.

"Then," said his mother, "you must look in the paper for the advertisements."

He looked at her. It seemed to him a better translation and an anguish to go through. But he said nothing. When he got up in the morning, his whole being was knotted up over this new thought.

"I've got to go and look for advertisements for a job."

It stood in front of the morning, that thought, killing all joy and even life, for him. His heart felt like a tight band.

And then, at ten o'clock, he set off. He was supposed to be a queer, quiet child. Giving up the sunny street of the little town, he felt as if all the hills he met said to themselves: "He's going to the Co-op reading-room to look in the papers for a place. He can't get a job. I suppose he's living on his mother." Then, he crept up the stone stairs behind the drapery store at the Co-op, and peeped in the reading-room. Usually one or two men were there, rather old, unglee fellows, or colliers "on the job." So he creased, full of shyness and suffering what they looked up, seated himself at the table, and pretended to scan the news. He knew they would think, "What does a lad of that sort want in a reading room with a newspaper?" and he suffered.

Then, he looked wistfully out of the window. Already he was a promoter of industrialism. Large customers stared over the old red wall of the garden opposite, looking in their jolly way down on the women who were busying with something for dinner. The valley was full of corn, brightening in the sun. Two columns, among the fields, waved their small white plumes of steam. Far off on the hills were the woods of Annetley, dark and fascinating. Already his heart went down. He was being taken into bondage. His freedom in the beloved home valley was going now.

The brewer's waggons came rolling up from Kenes with enormous harvest, that a hole, like hoars in a burnt bean-pod. The waggons, thumped aloft, rolling steadily in his seat, was not so much below Paul's eye. The man's hair, on his small, bull's head, was bleached almost white by the sun, and on his thick red nose, tucked up on his back upon the white hairs glimmered. His red face shone and was almost asleep with sunshine. The bones, tendons and brows, went on by themselves, looking by for the masters of the show.

Paul wished he were stupid. "I wish," he thought to himself, "I was like him, and like a dog in the sun. I wish I was a pig and a brewer's waggons."

Then, the room being as last empty, he would hastily copy an advertisement on a scrap of paper, then another, and slip out in unobtrusive relief. His mother would scan over his copy.

"Yes," she said, "you may try."

William had written out a letter of application, couched in admirable business language, which Paul copied, with variations. The boy's handwriting was miserable, so that William, who did all things well, got into a fever of impatience.

The older brother was becoming quite rusty. In London by

found he could associate with men far above his bestwood friends in station. Some of the clerks in the office had studied for the law, and were more or less going through a kind of apprenticeship. William always made friends among men wherever he went, he was so jolly. Therefore he was soon visiting and staying in houses of men who, in bestwood, would have looked down on the unapproachable bank manager, and would merely have called indifferently on the farmer. So he began to fancy himself as a great gun. He was, indeed, rather surprised at the ease with which he became a gentleman.

His mother was glad, he seemed so pleased. And his lodging in Whitechapel was so decent. But now there seemed to come a kind of fever into the young man's letters. He was unsettled by all the change, he did not stand firm on his own feet, but seemed to spin rather giddily on the quick current of the new life. His mother was anxious for him. She could feel him losing himself. He had danced and gone to the theatre, leaned on the sofa, been out with friends; and she knew he sat up afterwards in his cold bedroom grinding away at Latin, because he intended to go on at his office, and so the law as much as he could. She never sent him another penny more. It was all taken, the little he had, for his own life. And she did not want any, except necessities, when she was in a tight corner, and when ten shillings would have eased her much worry. She still dreamed of William, and of what he would do, with herself behind him. Never for a minute would she admit to herself how heavy and anxious her heart was because of him.

Also he talked a good deal now of a girl he had met at a dance, a handsome brunette, quite young, and a lady, after whom the men were running thick and fast.

"I wonder if you would mar, my boy," his mother wrote to him, "unless you saw all the other men chasing her too. You feel safe enough and vain enough in a crowd. But take care, and see how you feel when you find yourself alone, and in a clump."

William answered these things, and returned the chase. He had taken the girl on the sly. "If you saw her, mother, you would know how I feel. Tall and elegant, with the clearest of skin, transparent olive complexion, hair as black as jet, and such grey eyes—bright, sparkling, like light on water at night. It is all very well to be a bit nervous till you see her. And she smiles as well as any woman in London. I tell you, your son doesn't half put his head up when she goes walking down Piccadilly with him."

His mind wandered, in her hours, after one did not go walking down Piccadilly with an elegant figure and fine clothes, rather than with a woman who was near to him. But she congratulated

brown mood. All was quiet and very humble. Miss Morel sat, two steps forward, then waited. Paul stood behind her. She had on her Sunday bonnet and a blue veil; he wore a boy's broad white collar and a Norfolk suit.

One of the clerks looked up. He was thin and tall, with a small face. His way of looking was slow. Then he glanced round to the other end of the room, where was a glass-front. And then he came forward. He did not say anything, but bowed in a polite, inquiring fashion towards Miss Morel.

"Can I see Mr. Jordan?" she asked.

"It's back him," answered the young man.

He went down to the glass-front. A red-faced, white-skinned old man looked up. He reminded Paul of a pommelian dog. Then the same little man came up the room. He had short legs, was rather stout, and wore an alpaca jacket. So, with one ear up, as it were, he came slowly and inquiringly down the room.

"Good-morning!" he said, hesitating before Miss Morel, in doubt as to whether she were a customer or not.

"Good-morning. I came with my son, Paul Morel. You asked him to call this morning."

"Come this way," said Mr. Jordan, in a rather snappy little manner attended to be business-like.

They followed the manufacturer into a grubby little room, furnished in black American leather, glossy with the rubbing of many customers. On the table was a pile of gloves, yellow with leather frays tangled together. They looked new and lively; Paul sniffed the odour of new work leather. He wondered what the things were. By this time he was so much stunned that he only noticed the outside things.

"Sit down!" said Mr. Jordan, briskly pointing Miss Morel to a horse-hair chair. She sat on the edge in an uncertain fashion. Then the little old man edged up and found a paper.

"Did you write the letter?" he snapped, thrusting what Paul recognised as his own note-paper in front of him.

"Yes," he answered.

At that moment he was wrangled in two ways: first, in feeling guilty for telling a lie, since William had composed the letter; second, in wondering why the letter seemed so strange and different, in the fat, red hand of the man, from what it had been when it lay on the kitchen table. It was like part of himself, gone away. He noticed the way the man held it.

"When did you learn to write?" said the old man crossly.

Paul merely looked at him, silently, and did not answer.

"This is a bad write," put in Miss Morel apologetically. Then

She pushed up her veil. Paul blamed her for not being provided with this costume in the room, and he blamed her for doing it in the road.

<sup>10</sup> "And you say you know French?" "I speak the whole country, all the rules."

1998, 1999, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, 2012, 2013, 2014, 2015, 2016, 2017, 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, 2023, 2024, 2025, 2026, 2027, 2028, 2029, 2030, 2031, 2032, 2033, 2034, 2035, 2036, 2037, 2038, 2039, 2040, 2041, 2042, 2043, 2044, 2045, 2046, 2047, 2048, 2049, 2050, 2051, 2052, 2053, 2054, 2055, 2056, 2057, 2058, 2059, 2060, 2061, 2062, 2063, 2064, 2065, 2066, 2067, 2068, 2069, 2070, 2071, 2072, 2073, 2074, 2075, 2076, 2077, 2078, 2079, 2080, 2081, 2082, 2083, 2084, 2085, 2086, 2087, 2088, 2089, 2090, 2091, 2092, 2093, 2094, 2095, 2096, 2097, 2098, 2099, 2100, 2101, 2102, 2103, 2104, 2105, 2106, 2107, 2108, 2109, 2110, 2111, 2112, 2113, 2114, 2115, 2116, 2117, 2118, 2119, 2120, 2121, 2122, 2123, 2124, 2125, 2126, 2127, 2128, 2129, 2130, 2131, 2132, 2133, 2134, 2135, 2136, 2137, 2138, 2139, 2140, 2141, 2142, 2143, 2144, 2145, 2146, 2147, 2148, 2149, 2150, 2151, 2152, 2153, 2154, 2155, 2156, 2157, 2158, 2159, 2160, 2161, 2162, 2163, 2164, 2165, 2166, 2167, 2168, 2169, 2170, 2171, 2172, 2173, 2174, 2175, 2176, 2177, 2178, 2179, 2180, 2181, 2182, 2183, 2184, 2185, 2186, 2187, 2188, 2189, 2190, 2191, 2192, 2193, 2194, 2195, 2196, 2197, 2198, 2199, 2200, 2201, 2202, 2203, 2204, 2205, 2206, 2207, 2208, 2209, 2210, 2211, 2212, 2213, 2214, 2215, 2216, 2217, 2218, 2219, 2220, 2221, 2222, 2223, 2224, 2225, 2226, 2227, 2228, 2229, 2230, 2231, 2232, 2233, 2234, 2235, 2236, 2237, 2238, 2239, 2240, 2241, 2242, 2243, 2244, 2245, 2246, 2247, 2248, 2249, 2250, 2251, 2252, 2253, 2254, 2255, 2256, 2257, 2258, 2259, 2260, 2261, 2262, 2263, 2264, 2265, 2266, 2267, 2268, 2269, 2270, 2271, 2272, 2273, 2274, 2275, 2276, 2277, 2278, 2279, 2280, 2281, 2282, 2283, 2284, 2285, 2286, 2287, 2288, 2289, 2290, 2291, 2292, 2293, 2294, 2295, 2296, 2297, 2298, 2299, 2300, 2301, 2302, 2303, 2304, 2305, 2306, 2307, 2308, 2309, 2310, 2311, 2312, 2313, 2314, 2315, 2316, 2317, 2318, 2319, 2320, 2321, 2322, 2323, 2324, 2325, 2326, 2327, 2328, 2329, 2330, 2331, 2332, 2333, 2334, 2335, 2336, 2337, 2338, 2339, 2340, 2341, 2342, 2343, 2344, 2345, 2346, 2347, 2348, 2349, 2350, 2351, 2352, 2353, 2354, 2355, 2356, 2357, 2358, 2359, 2360, 2361, 2362, 2363, 2364, 2365, 2366, 2367, 2368, 2369, 2370, 2371, 2372, 2373, 2374, 2375, 2376, 2377, 2378, 2379, 2380, 2381, 2382, 2383, 2384, 2385, 2386, 2387, 2388, 2389, 2390, 2391, 2392, 2393, 2394, 2395, 2396, 2397, 2398, 2399, 2400, 2401, 2402, 2403, 2404, 2405, 2406, 2407, 2408, 2409, 2410, 2411, 2412, 2413, 2414, 2415, 2416, 2417, 2418, 2419, 2420, 2421, 2422, 2423, 2424, 2425, 2426, 2427, 2428, 2429, 2430, 2431, 2432, 2433, 2434, 2435, 2436, 2437, 2438, 2439, 2440, 2441, 2442, 2443, 2444, 2445, 2446, 2447, 2448, 2449, 2450, 2451, 2452, 2453, 2454, 2455, 2456, 2457, 2458, 2459, 2460, 2461, 2462, 2463, 2464, 2465, 2466, 2467, 2468, 2469, 2470, 2471, 2472, 2473, 2474, 2475, 2476, 2477, 2478, 2479, 2480, 2481, 2482, 2483, 2484, 2485, 2486, 2487, 2488, 2489, 2490, 2491, 2492, 2493, 2494, 2495, 2496, 2497, 2498, 2499, 2500, 2501, 2502, 2503, 2504, 2505, 2506, 2507, 2508, 2509, 2510, 2511, 2512, 2513, 2514, 2515, 2516, 2517, 2518, 2519, 2520, 2521, 2522, 2523, 2524, 2525, 2526, 2527, 2528, 2529, 2530, 2531, 2532, 2533, 2534, 2535, 2536, 2537, 2538, 2539, 2540, 2541, 2542, 2543, 2544, 2545, 2546, 2547, 2548, 2549, 2550, 2551, 2552, 2553, 2554, 2555, 2556, 2557, 2558, 2559, 2560, 2561, 2562, 2563, 2564, 2565, 2566, 2567, 2568, 2569, 2570, 2571, 2572, 2573, 2574, 2575, 2576, 2577, 2578, 2579, 2580, 2581, 2582, 2583, 2584, 2585, 2586, 2587, 2588, 2589, 2590, 2591, 2592, 2593, 2594, 2595, 2596, 2597, 2598, 2599, 2600, 2601, 2602, 2603, 2604, 2605, 2606, 2607, 2608, 2609, 2610, 2611, 2612, 2613, 2614, 2615, 2616, 2617, 2618, 2619, 2620, 2621, 2622, 2623, 2624, 2625, 2626, 2627, 2628, 2629, 2630, 2631, 2632, 2633, 2634, 2635, 2636, 2637, 2638, 2639, 2640, 2641, 2642, 2643, 2644, 2645, 2646, 2647, 2648, 2649, 2650, 2651, 2652, 2653, 2654, 2655, 2656, 2657, 2658, 2659, 2660, 2661, 2662, 2663, 2664, 2665, 2666, 2667, 2668, 2669, 2670, 2671, 2672, 2673, 2674, 2675, 2676, 2677, 2678, 2679, 26

• **Wavelength:** distance between two consecutive crests or troughs of a wave.

■ **The second sentence**

David Child, *Senior Lecturer in Design*

<sup>22</sup> "Baptism," *The Holy and Living Church*, and *the ex-catholics*.

"His goddess gave him lessons," said Mrs. Ward, half smiling and rather distant.

Mr. Jackson hesitated. Then, in his reliable manner—he always seemed to keep his hands ready for action—he pulled another sheet of paper from his pocket, unfolded it. The paper made a crackling noise. He handed it to Paul.

— **“The world is a stage, and we are all players in it.”**

It was a note in French, in this, slanting foreign handwriting that the boy could not decipher. He stared blankly at the paper.

"'Idiotology,'" he began, then he looked at great confusion at Mr. Forster. "It's the—the the—"

He wanted to say "hardworking," but his wife would no longer work even sufficiently to supply him with the wood. Feeling as over-tired, and having Mr. Jordan, he turned desperately to the next action.

51. *Su*: 'Hence read me'-*er-er*-I can't tell the-*er*-' you  
 pain-*gu* *ŋ* *ku*-grey thread stockings'-*er-er*-' you-with-  
 out 'marred' can't tell the work-*er-er*/'legs-*ŋ*per'-*er*-I  
 can't tell the-''

He wanted to say "handwriting," but the word still refused to come. Baring him back, Mr. Jordan watched the censor from his

<sup>22</sup> <sup>23</sup> <sup>24</sup> <sup>25</sup> <sup>26</sup> <sup>27</sup> <sup>28</sup> <sup>29</sup> <sup>30</sup> <sup>31</sup> <sup>32</sup> <sup>33</sup> <sup>34</sup> <sup>35</sup> <sup>36</sup> <sup>37</sup> <sup>38</sup> <sup>39</sup> <sup>40</sup> <sup>41</sup> <sup>42</sup> <sup>43</sup> <sup>44</sup> <sup>45</sup> <sup>46</sup> <sup>47</sup> <sup>48</sup> <sup>49</sup> <sup>50</sup> <sup>51</sup> <sup>52</sup> <sup>53</sup> <sup>54</sup> <sup>55</sup> <sup>56</sup> <sup>57</sup> <sup>58</sup> <sup>59</sup> <sup>60</sup> <sup>61</sup> <sup>62</sup> <sup>63</sup> <sup>64</sup> <sup>65</sup> <sup>66</sup> <sup>67</sup> <sup>68</sup> <sup>69</sup> <sup>70</sup> <sup>71</sup> <sup>72</sup> <sup>73</sup> <sup>74</sup> <sup>75</sup> <sup>76</sup> <sup>77</sup> <sup>78</sup> <sup>79</sup> <sup>80</sup> <sup>81</sup> <sup>82</sup> <sup>83</sup> <sup>84</sup> <sup>85</sup> <sup>86</sup> <sup>87</sup> <sup>88</sup> <sup>89</sup> <sup>90</sup> <sup>91</sup> <sup>92</sup> 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<sup>21</sup>Well," declared Paul, " 'depth' means 'depths'—as well—as a rule—"

The Duke was looked at him. He did not know whether "dign" meant "frozen"; he knew that for all his purposes it meant "yes."

■ **Business is booming!** — by Richard

<sup>22</sup> While it does mean "savage," the term pervaded

He hated the idle men, who made such a clod of him. Mr. Jordan looked at the pale, stricken, dejected boy, then at the mother, who sat quiet and with that peculiar shut-off look of the poor who have no depend on the favour of others.

<sup>22</sup> *Journal of Management Education*, 2000, 24(1), 10-19.

"Well," said Mrs. Morel, "as soon as you wish. He has finished school now."

"He would live in Brereton?"

"Yes, but he could be an—at the station—at quarter to eight."

"It's no!"

It ended by Paul's being engaged as junior agent clerk at eight o'clock—a week. The boy did not open his mouth to any standing word, after having indicated these "eight" means "eighteen." He followed his mother down the stairs. She looked at him with her bright blue eyes full of love and joy.

"I think you'll like it," she said.

"Eight 'does mean 'eighteen,' mother, and it was the writing I couldn't read the writing!"

"Never mind, my boy. I'm sure he'll be all right, and you won't see much of him. What's that first young fellow about? I'm sure you'll like them."

"But what's that Mr. Jordan coming, mother? Does he own a shop?"

"I suppose he was a workman who has got on," she said. "You mustn't mind people so much. They're not being disagreeable to you—it's their way. You always think people are meaning things for you. But they don't."

It was very warm. Over the big desolate space of the market-place the blue sky shimmered, and the granite cobble of the paving glared. Shops down the Long Row were deep in shadow, and the shadow was full of colour. Just where the horse vans trundled across the market was a row of fruit stalls, with fruit blazing in the sun—apples and pears of reddish tinges, small pronged pines and lemons. There was a warm scent of fruit as mother and son passed. Gradually her feeling of ignorance and of rage went.

"Where should we go for dinner?" asked the mother.

It was his to be a cookish man-of-business. Paul had only been to an eating-house once or twice in his life, and then only to have a cup of tea and a bun. Most of the people of Brereton considered that tea and bread and butter, and perhaps posset too, was all they could afford to eat in Nottingham. Real cooked dinner was considered great extravagance. Paul felt rather giddy.

They found a place that looked quite cheap. But when Mrs. Morel scanned the bill at five, her heart was heavy, things were so dear. So she ordered hotdry pie and potatoes as the cheapest available dish.

"We oughtn't to have come here, mother," said Paul.

"Never mind," she said. "We won't come again."



She insisted on his having a small corner suit, because he liked to-go.

"I don't want it, mother," he pleaded.

"Yes," she insisted; "you'll have it."

And she looked round for the waitress. But the waitress was busy, and Mrs. Morel did not like to bother her then. So she mother and son waited for the girl's pleasure, whilst she flitted among the men.

"Beeson hurry!" said Mrs. Morel to Paul. "Look now, she's asking that man his pocketing, and he stays long after us."

"It doesn't matter, mother," said Paul.

Mrs. Morel was angry. But she was too poor, and had orders with too many, so that she had not the courage to insist on her rights just then. They waited and waited.

"Should we go, mother?" he said.

Then Mrs. Morel stood up. The girl was passing now.

"Will you bring me corner suit?" said Mrs. Morel clearly.

The girl looked round modestly.

"Directly," she said.

"We have waited quite long enough," said Mrs. Morel.

In a moment the girl came back with the suit. Mrs. Morel asked coldly for the bill. Paul wanted to sink through the floor. He marvelled at his mother's hardness. He knew that only years of battling had taught her to make men as little on her rights. She struck as much as he.

"It's the last time I go down for anything!" she declared, when they were outside the place, thankful to be clear.

"We'll go," she said, "and look at Koop's and Boon's, and one or two places, shall we?"

They had discussions over the pictures, and Mrs. Morel wanted to buy him a little cable brush that he had looked after. But the indifference he refused. He stood in front of milliners' shops and drapers' shops almost bored, but content for her to be interested. They wandered on.

"Now, just look at those black grapes!" she said. "They make your mouth water. I've wanted some of those for years, but I'll have to wait a bit before I get them."

Then she stopped in the flower, standing in the doorway waiting.

"Oh! oh! Isn't it simply lovely?"

Paul saw, in the darkness of the shop, an elegant young lady in black peering over the counter curiously.

"They're looking at you," he said, trying to draw his mother away.

"But what is it?" she exclaimed, refusing to be moved.

"Sticks!" he answered, smiling heavily. "Look, there's a child!"

"So were we—and where. But really, I never knew sticks to smell like oil!" And, to his great relief, she moved out of the doorway, but only to stand in front of the window.

"Paul?" she cried to him, who was trying to get out of sight of the elegant young lady in black—the shop-girl.

"Paul? Just look here!"

He came reluctantly back.

"Now, just look at that picture!" she exclaimed, pointing.

"If it—" He made a curious, startled sound. "You'd think every second in the flower was going to fall off, they hang so big and heavy!"

"And such an abundance!" she cried.

"And the way they drop downwards with those thorns and bristles!"

"Yes!" she exclaimed. "Lovely!"

"I wonder who'll buy it!" he said.

"I wonder!" she answered. "Not us!"

"It would do us our purpose!"

"Yes, heavily wither, wither away, it kills every bit of a plant you put on, and the kitchen chooses them to do that!"

They bought a few things, and set off towards the station. Looking up the canal, through the dark pores of the buildings, they saw the Castle on its bluff of brown, green-barked rock, in a picture made of delicate windows.

"What's it he says for you to come out at dinner-time?" said Paul. "I can go all round here and see every thing. I'll love it."

"You will," asserted his mother.

He had spent a perfect afternoon with his mother. They arrived home in the middle evening, happy, and glowing, and tired.

In the morning he filled in the form for his summer-school and took it to the station. When he got back, his mother was just beginning to wash the floor. He sat crouched up on the sofa.

"He says it'll be here by Saturday," he said.

"And how much will it be?"

"About one pound eleven," he said.

She went on washing her floor in silence.

"Is it a lot?" he asked.

"It's no more than I thought," she answered.

"But I'll earn eight shillings a week," he said.

She did not answer, but went on with her work. At last she said:

"That William promised me, when he went to London, to let's

give me a pound a month. He has given me ten shillings—twice, and now I know he hasn't a farthing if I asked him. Not that I want it. Only just now you'd think he might be able to help with the taxes, which I'd never expected."

"He owes a lot," said Paul.

"He owes a hundred and thirty pounds. But they're all little. They're large payments, but no personal kindnesses that you get."

"He spends over fifty shillings a week on himself," said Paul.

"And I keep the house on less than thirty," she replied. "and am supposed to find money for the taxes. But they don't care about helping you, once they've gone. He'd rather spend it on that damned-up creature."

"She should have her own money if she's so good," said Paul.

"She should, but she hasn't. I asked him. And I know he doesn't buy her a gold bangle for nothing. I wonder whoever brought me a gold bangle."

William was reverting with his "Gipsy," as he called her. He asked the girl—her name was Louisa Lily Danya Worsen—for a photograph to send to his mother. The photo came—a handsome brunette, taken in profile, smiling slightly—and, as might be, quite naked, for on the photograph not a scrap of clothing was to be seen, only a naked bust.

"Yes," wrote Mrs. Morel to her son, "the photograph of Louisa is very striking, and I can see she must be attractive. But do you think, my boy, it was very good taste of a girl to give her young man that photo to send to his mother—the first? Certainly the shoulders are beautiful, as you say. But I hardly expected to see so much of them at the first view."

Mrs. Morel found the photograph standing on the dresser in the parlour. He came out with it between his thick thumb and finger.

"Who does reckon that at?" he asked of his wife.

"It's the girl our William is going with," replied Mrs. Morel.

"Him? He's a league apart from the lot here on 'em, and he wants do him contrary good reason. Who is that?"

"Her name is Louisa Lily Danya Worsen."

"And come again to-morrow!" exclaimed the sister. "And as he is an actor?"

"She is not. She's supposed to be a lady."

"I'll bet!" he exclaimed, still staring at the photo. "A lady, is she? And how much does she reckon on keep up that sort of game on?"

"Oh, nothing. She lives with an old aunt, whom she hates, and takes what bit of money's given her."

"That!" said Maud, laying down the photograph. "Then he's a fool to be 'a'is up at' such a snap as that."

"Dear Maud," William replied. "I'm sorry you didn't like the photograph. It never occurred to me when I sent it, that you mightn't think it decent. However, I told Gips that it didn't quite suit your pious and proper notions, so she's going to send you another, that I hope will please you better. There's always being photographed, at last, the photographers ask her if they may take her for nothing."

Presently the new photograph came, with a little silly note from the girl. This time the young lady was seen in a black satin evening bodice, cut square, with little puff sleeves, and black lace hanging down her beautiful arms.

"I wonder if she ever wears anything except evening clothes," said Mrs. Moorl sarcastically. "For now I ought to be impressed."

"You are dangerous, mother," said Paul. "I think the first cut with bare shoulders is lovely."

"Do you?" answered his mother. "Well I don't."

On the Monday morning the boy got up at six to start work. He had the season-ticket, which had cost such agonies, in his waistcoat-pocket. He let it lie with its bars of yellow across. His mother packed his dinner in a small, neat-up basket, and he set off as a quarter to seven to catch the 5.15 train. Mrs. Moorl came to the entry and to see him off.

It was a perfect morning. From the soft-toned clouds, green from that the children call "popcorn" were twinkling gaily down on a leafy house, into the front garden of the house. The valley was full of a barren dark haze, through which the ripe corn shimmered, and in which the stream from Morton glit washed swiftly. Falls of wind came. Paul looked over the high winds of Alderley, where the country gleamed, and home had never pulled at him so powerfully.

"Good-morning, mother," he said, smiling, but feeling very unhappy.

"Good-morning," she replied cheerfully and toothily.

She stood in her white apron on the open road, watching him as he crossed the field. He had a small, compact body that looked full of life. She felt, as she saw him twirling over the field, that when he determined to go he would get. She thought of William. He would have leaped the fence instead of going round to the stile. He was away in London, doing well. Paul would be working in Nottingham. Now she had two men in the world. She could think of two places, great centres of industry, and feel that she had put a man into each of them, that these men would make out what she

wanted, they were denied from her, they were of her, and their work also would be hers. All the morning long the thought of Paul.

At eight o'clock he climbed the distant stairs of Jordan's Imperial Appliance Factory, and stood helplessly against the first great parcel rack, waiting for someone to pick him up. The place was still not awake. Over the counters were great dust sheets. Two men only had arrived, and were heard talking in a corner, as they took off their coats and rolled up their shirt-sleeves. It was not past eight. Evidently there was no rush of production. Paul listened to the voices of the two clerks. Then he heard someone cough, and saw in the office at the end of the room an old decaying clerk, in a round smoking-cap of black velvet embroidered with red and green, opening his eyes. He waited and waited. One of the junior clerks went to the old man, greeted him cheerily and loudly. Evidently the old "clerk" was deaf. Then the young fellow came striding importantly down to his country. He spoke Paul.

"Hello!" he said. "You the new lad?"

"Yes," said Paul.

"Hi-yo! What's your name?"

"Paul Morel."

"Paul Morel? All right, you come on round here."

Paul followed him round the rectangle of counters. The room was second-storey. It had a great hole in the middle of the floor, lined as with a wall of counters, and down this wide shaft the lifts went, and the light for the bottom storey. Also there was a corresponding big, oblong hole in the ceiling, and one could see above, over the lines of the top floor, some machinery; and right away overhead was the glass roof, and all light for the three storeys came downwards, getting dimmer, so that it was always light on the ground floor and rather gloomy on the second floor. The factory was the top floor, the warehouse the second, the storehouse the ground floor. It was an unattractive, ancient place.

Paul was led round to a very dark corner.

"This is the 'Spind' corner," said the clerk. "You're Spind, with Pappleworth. He's your boss, but he's not same yet. He doesn't get here till half-past eight. So you can look the books, if you like, down Mr. Melling down there."

The young man pointed to the old clerk in the office.

"All right," said Paul.

"Here's a peg to hang your cap on. Here are your entry books. Mr. Pappleworth won't be long."

And the thin young man stalked away with long, busy strides over the hollow wooden floor.

After a minute or two Paul went down and stood in the door of the glass office. The old clerk in the smoking-cap looked down over the rim of his spectacles.

"Good-morning," he said, kindly and respectfully. "You want the letters for the Special Department, Thomas?"

Paul remained being called "Thomas." But he took the letters and returned to his desk place, where the counter made an angle, where the great parcel-rack came to an end, and where there were three gates to the counter. He sat on a high stool and read the letters—those whose handwriting was not too difficult. They ran as follows:

"Will you please send me at once a pair of lady's silk spinal slippers, narrow foot, such as I had from you last year, length eight to nine, etc." On "Major Chamberlain" wished to repeat his previous order for a silk non-slipper emergency handgrip.

Many of these letters, some of them in French or Norwegian, were a great puzzle to the boy. He sat on his stool nervously awaiting the arrival of his "box." He suffered nervous depression when, at half-past eight, the factory girls for upstairs trooped past him.

Mr. Pappleworth arrived, showing a chlorodyne pain, in about twenty to thirty, when all the other men were at work. He was a thin, yellow man with a red nose, quick, nervous, and smartly but stiffly dressed. He was about thirty-six years old. There was something rather "doggy," rather mean, rather base and distrustful, and something worse, and something slightly contemptible about him.

"You my new lad?" he said.

Paul stood up and said he was.

"Fetched the letter?"

Mr. Pappleworth gave a shove to his gun.

"Yes."

"Changed 'em?"

"No."

"Well, come on then, let's both doggy. Changed your coat?"

"No."

"You want to bring an old coat and leave it here?" He propped the gun loosely with the chlorodyne gun between his side teeth. He vanished into darkness behind the great parcel-rack, reappeared upstairs, turning up a smart striped shirt-cuff over a thin and hairy arm. Then he slipped into his coat. Paul noticed how thin he was, and that his trousers were tightly behind. He seized a stool, dragged it beside the boy's, and sat down.

"So down," he said.

Paul took a seat.

Mr. Pappleworth was very close to him. The man round the corner, watched a long entry-book out of a rack in front of him, along it open, turned a page, and said:

"Done bad, here. You want to copy these letters in here." He snuffed, coughed, gave a quick shove at his glass, raised steadily at a letter, then went very still and absorbed, and wrote the entry rapidly, in a beautiful flourishing hand. He glanced quickly at Paul.

"See that?"

"Yes."

"Thank you can do it all right?"

"Yes."

"All right then, let's see you."

He sprung off his stool. Paul took a pen. Mr. Pappleworth disappeared. Paul rather liked copying the letters, but he miserably, laboriously, and amazingly badly. He was doing the fourth letter, and feeling quite busy and happy, when Mr. Pappleworth reappeared.

"Now then, how'y yer getting on? Done 'em?"

He leaned over the boy's shoulder, chewing, and swelling of chorodysa.

"Larkin my help, lad, but you're a beautiful writer!" he exclaimed ecstatically. "Me'er mind, how many h'yer done? Only three? I'd 'a eaten 'em. Get 'em, my lad, an' put numbers on 'em. Hark look! Get on!"

Paul ground away at the letters, while Mr. Pappleworth looked over various jobs. Suddenly the boy started as a shrill whistle sounded near his ear. Mr. Pappleworth came, took a plug out of a pipe, and said, in an amazingly calm and hoarse voice:

"Yes!"

Paul heard a faint noise, like a woman's, out of the mouth of the tube. He stared in wonder, never having seen a speaking-tube before.

"Well," said Mr. Pappleworth disapprobably into the tube, "you'd better get some of your back work done, then."

Again the woman's very voice was heard, sounding pretty and calm.

"I've not time to stand here while you talk," said Mr. Pappleworth, and he pushed the plug into the tube.

"Come, my lad," he said imploringly to Paul, "there's Polly crying out for them orders. Can't you back up a bit? Here, come on!"

He took the book, to Paul's immense chagrin, and he—

cupping himself. He worked quickly and well. This done, he sorted some strips of long yellow paper, about three inches wide, and made out the day's orders for the workgirls.

"You'd better watch me," he said to Paul, working all the while rapidly. Paul watched the weird little drawings of legs, and thighs, and ankles, with the scales across and the numbers, and the few brief drawings which he chief made upon the yellow paper. Then Mr. Papplesworth finished and jumped up.

"Come on with me," he said, and the yellow papers flying in his hands, he dashed through a door and down some stairs, into the basement where the gas was burning. They entered the cold, damp storeroom, then a long, dimly lit room with a long table on trestles, into a smaller, cosy apartment, not very high, which had been built on to the main building. In this room a small woman with a red serge blouse, and her black hair done on top of her head, was waiting like a petted little housemaid.

"Here y'are!" said Papplesworth.

"I think it is 'have you are!'" exclaimed Polly. "The girls have been here nearly half an hour waiting. Just think of the time wasted!"

"I'm think of getting your work done and not talking so much," said Mr. Papplesworth. "You could be' been finishing off!"

"You know quite well we finished everything off on Saturday!" cried Polly, flying at him, her dark eyes flashing.

"To-to-to-to-terrible!" he muttered. "Here's your new lad. Don't wait him as you did the last."

"As we did the last?" repeated Polly. "Yes, we do a lot of running, we do. My word, a lad would take some running after he'd been with you."

"It's time for work now, not for talk," said Mr. Papplesworth severely and mildly.

"It was time for work some time back," said Polly, marching away with her head on the air. She was an even little body of flesh.

In that room were two round spinal machines in the bench under the window. Through the inner doorway was another bigger room, with six more machines. A little group of girls, nicely dressed and in white aprons, stood talking together.

"Have you nothing else to do but talk?" said Mr. Papplesworth.

"Only wait for you," said one handsome girl, laughing.

"Well, get on, get on," he said. "Come on, my lad. You'll have your run down here again."

And Paul ran upstairs after his child. He was given some chalking and printing to do. He stood at the desk, listening to



his miserable handwriting. Presently Mr. Jordan came strutting down from the glass office and stood behind him, in the boy's great discomfort. Suddenly a red and flat finger was thrust on the form he was filling in.

"Mr. J. A. Bates, Esquire?" evidenced the cross voice just behind his ear.

Paul looked at "Mr. J. A. Bates, Esquire" in his own side writing, and wondered what was the matter now.

"Didn't they teach you any better than that while they were at it? If you put 'Mr.' you don't put 'Esquire'—a man can't be both at once."

The boy regretted his two-track gateway in dropping of Esquires, hesitated, and with trembling fingers, scratched out the "Mr." Then all at once Mr. Jordan marched away the window.

"Make another! Are you going to send that to a gentleman?" And he tore up the blue form unthinkably.

Paul, his ears red with shame, began again. And Mr. Jordan watched.

"I don't know what they do teach in school. You'd have to write better than that. Lots have nothing nowadays, but how to write poetry and play the fiddle. Have you seen his writing?" he asked of Mr. Papplesworth.

"Yes, please, isn't it?" replied Mr. Papplesworth indifferently.

Mr. Jordan gave a little grunt, not unkindly. Paul decided that his master's back was worse than his face. Indeed, the Duke manufacturer, although he spoke bad English, was quite gentleman enough to leave his men alone and to take no notice of style. But he knew he did not look like the boss and owner of the show, so he had to play his style of proposition as best, to put things on a right footing.

"Let's see, what's your name?" asked Mr. Papplesworth of the boy.

"Paul Morel."

It is curious that children suffer so much at having to pronounce their own names.

"Paul Morel, is it? All right, you Paul-Morel through them things there, and them—"

Mr. Papplesworth extended on to a stool, and began writing. A girl came up from out of a door just behind, put some newly poured starch with appliances on the counter, and returned. Mr. Papplesworth picked up the white-blue knee-band, examined it, and its yellow order-paper quickly, and put it on one side. Next was a flesh-pink "leg." He went through the few things, wrote out a couple of orders, and called to Paul to accompany him. This

then they went through the door whence the girl had emerged. There Paul found himself at the top of a little wooden flight of steps, and below him saw a room with windows round two sides, and at the farther end half a dozen girls sitting huddled near the benches in the light from the windows, sewing. They were singing together "Two Little Girls in Blue." Hearing the door closed, they all turned round, to see Mr. Pappleworth and Paul looking down on them from the far end of the room. They stopped singing.

"Can't you make a bit less now?" said Mr. Pappleworth. "Folks'll think we keep 'em."

A hunchback woman on a high stool turned her long, rather heavy face towards Mr. Pappleworth, and said, in a contralto voice.

"They're all bon-vais then."

He said Mr. Pappleworth tried to be impudic for Paul's benefit. He descended the steps into the finishing-off room, and went to the hunchback Fanny. She had such a short body on her high stool that her head, with its great bands of bright brown hair, seemed over large, as did her pale, heavy face. She wore a dress of green-black calico, and her arms, coming out of the narrow gulf, were thin and flat, as she put down her work nervously. He showed her something that was wrong with a knee-cap.

"Well," she said, "you wouldn't come blabbing it on to me. It's not my fault." Her colour rose to her cheeks.

"I never said it was your fault. Will you do as I tell you?" replied Mr. Pappleworth shortly.

"You don't say it's my fault, but you'd like to make out to it was," the hunchback woman cried, almost in tears. Then she snatched the knee-cap from her "bow," saying: "Yes, I'll do as he says, but you needn't be snappy."

"Here's your new lad," said Mr. Pappleworth.

Fanny turned, smiling very gently on Paul.

"Oh!" she said.

"You don't make a wally of him between you."

"It's not us as 'ud make a wally of him," she said indignantly.

"Come on then, Paul," said Mr. Pappleworth.

"As says, Paul," said one of the girls.

There was a stir of laughter. Paul went out, blushing deeply, not having spoken a word.

The day was very long. All morning the work-people were coming to speak to Mr. Pappleworth. Paul was writing or learning to make up parcels, ready for the midday post. At one o'clock, or, rather, at a quarter to one, Mr. Pappleworth disappeared to catch

his train. He lived in the suburbs. At one o'clock, Paul, feeling very late, took his dinner-bucket down into the workroom on the basement, that had the long table on trestles, and ate his meal hurriedly, alone in that cellar of gloom and desolation. Then he went out of doors. The brightness and the freedom of the street made him feel subconscious and happy. But at two o'clock he was back in the corner of the big room. Soon the work girls were sweeping past, smiling merrily. It was the commoner girl who worked upstairs at the heavy task of trim-making and the finishing of seasonal hats. He waited for Mr. Pappaworth, not knowing what to do, sitting scribbling on the yellow index-paper. Mr. Pappaworth came at twenty minutes to three. Then he sat and gossiped with Paul, treating the boy exactly as an equal, even in age.

In the afternoon there was never very much to do, unless it were near the weekend, and the accounts had to be made up. At five o'clock all the men went down into the dampers with the table on trestles, and there they had tea, eating bread and butter on the bare, dirty boards, talking with the same kind of easy ease and stolidness with which they ate their meal. And yet again the atmosphere among them was always jolly and dense. The cellar and the trestles affected them.

After tea, when all the girls were lighted, and went more busily. There was the big evening post to get off. The boss came up stairs and nearly passed from the workroom. Paul had made out the invoices. Now he had the packing up and addressing to do, then he had to weigh his stack of parcels on the scales. Everywhere voices were calling weights, there was the clank of metal, the rapid snapping of scales, the hurrying of old Mr. Melling for stamps. And at last the postman came with his sack, laughing and jolly. Then everything stacked off, and Paul took his dinner-bucket and ran to the station to catch the eight-twenty train. The day in the factory was just twelve hours long.

His mother sat waiting for him rather anxiously. He had to walk from Kewton, so was not home until about twenty past seven. And he left the house before seven in the morning. Mrs. Moor was rather anxious about her health. But she herself had had to put up with so much that she expected her children to take the same odds. They must go through with what came. And Paul ran at Fordale, although all the time he was there his health suffered from the darkness and lack of air and the long hours.

He came in pale and sleek. His mother looked at him. She was he rather pleased, and her anxiety all went.

"Well, and how was it?" she asked.

"Ever so heavy, mother," he replied. "You don't have to work a bit hard, and they're nice with you."

"And did you get on all right?"

"Yes, they only try my writing's bad. But Mr. Pappleworth—he's my master—said to Mr. Jordan I should be all right. You Spaul, mother, you must come and see. It's over so fast."

Soon he liked Jordan's. Mr. Pappleworth, who had a certain "air" about him, was always natural, and treated him as if he had been a servant. Sometimes the "Spaul boy" was unruly, and showed more temper than even. Even then, however, he was not offensive, but one of those people who hurt those whom by their own unruliness more than they hurt other people.

"Haven't you done that yet?" he would cry. "Go on, be a month of Sundays."

Again, and Paul could understand him least then, he was jocular and in high spirits.

"I'm going to bring our little Yorkshire master back tomorrow," he said jocularly to Paul.

"What's a Yorkshire master?"

"Don't know what a Yorkshire terrier is? Don't know a Yorkshire—!" Mr. Pappleworth was aghast.

"Is it a little silky one—colour of eyes and curly silver?"

"That's a, my lad. She's a gem. She's had five pounds' worth of pups already, and she's worth over seven pounds herself; and she doesn't weigh twenty ounces."

The next day the birds came. She was a shivering, miserable morsel. Paul did not care for her; she seemed as like a wet rag that would never dry. Then a man called for her, and began to make comic jokes. But Mr. Pappleworth avoided his head in the direction of the boy, and the talk went on as usual.

Mr. Jordan only made one more attempt to watch Paul, and then the only fault he found was seeing the boy try his pen on the counter.

"Put your pen in your ear, if you're going to be a clerk. Pen in your ear!" And one day he said to the lad, "Why don't you hold your shoulders straighter? Come down here," when he took him into the ghost office and fixed him with special braces for keeping the shoulders square.

But Paul liked the girls best. The men seemed common and rather dull. He liked them all, but they were uninteresting. Polly, the little Irish creature downstairs, finding Paul eating in the cellar, asked him if she could cook him anything on her little stove. Next day his mother gave him a dish that could be heated up. He took it into the pleasant, clean room to Polly. And very soon

it grew to be an established custom that he should have dinner with her. When he came in at eight in the morning he took his basket to her, and when he came down at one o'clock she had his dinner ready.

He was not very tall, and pale, with thick chestnut hair, irregular features, and a wide, full mouth. She was like a small bird. He often called her a "robber." Though naturally rather quiet, he would sit and chatter with her for hours telling her about his home. The girls all liked to hear him talk. They often gathered in a little circle while he sat on a bench, and held forth to them, laughing some of them regarded him as a curious little creature, so serious, yet so bright and pale, and always so delicate in his way with them. They all liked him, and he adored them. Polly he felt he belonged to. Then Emma, with her mass of red hair, her face of apple-blossoms, her murmuring voice, such a lady in her shabby black frock, appealed to his romantic side.

"When you're winding," he said, "it looks as if you were spinning at a spinning-wheel—it looks ever so nice. You remind me of Alice in the 'Lipps of the King.' I'd drive you if I could."

And she glanced at him blushing slightly. And later on he had a knock he prized very much: Emma sitting on her stool before the wheel, her flowing mass of red hair on her many black frock, her red mouth shut and serious, running the scarlet thread off the back on to the reel.

With Lydia, handsome and brassy, who always seemed to thrust her hip at him, he usually joked.

Emma was rather plain, rather old, and condescending. But to confound him she made her happy, and he did not mind.

"How do you put needles in?" he asked.

"Go away and don't bother."

"But I ought to know how to put needles in."

She ground at her machine all the while steadily.

"There are many things you ought to know," she replied.

"Tell me, then, how to stick needles in the machine."

"Oh, the boy, what a nuisance he is! Why, do it how you do it."

He watched her anxiously. Suddenly a whistle piped. Then Polly appeared, and said in a clear voice:

"Mr. Pappineworth wants to know how much longer you're going to be down here playing with the girls, Paul."

Paul flew upstairs, calling "Good-bye!" and Emma drew herself up.

"It wasn't *me* who wanted him to play with the machine," she said.

As a rule, when all the girls came back at two o'clock, he ran upstairs to Fanny, the landlady, in the dressing-off room. My. Pappaworth did not appear ill usually to them, and he often found his boy-loving lands Fanny, talking, or drawing, or staying with the girls.

Often, after a minute's hesitation, Fanny would begin to sing. She had a fine contralto-voice. Everybody joined in the chorus, and it went well. Paul was not at all embarrassed, when a whole string in the room with the half a dozen work-girls.

At the end of the song Fanny would say:

"I know you've been laughing at me."

"Don't be so silly, Fanny!" cried one of the girls.

Once there was mention of Emma's red hair.

"Fanny's a better, to my fancy," said Emma.

"You needn't try to make a fool of me," said Fanny, flushing deeply.

"No, but she has, Paul; she's got beautiful hair."

"It's a treat of a colour," said he. "That crimson colour like earth, and yet shiny. It's like log-wood."

"Goodness me!" exclaimed one girl, laughing.

"How I do but get confused!" said Fanny.

"But you should see it down, Paul," cried Emma earnestly.

"It's simply beautiful. But it's down for him, Fanny, if he wants something to paint."

Fanny would not, and yet she wanted to.

"Then I'll take it down myself," said the lad.

"Well, you can if you like," said Fanny.

And he carefully took the pins out of the knot, and the rush of hair, of wavy dark brown, slid over the humped back.

"What a lovely lot!" he exclaimed.

The girls watched. There was silence. The youth shook the hair loose from the coil.

"It's splendid!" he said, smiling in pleasure. "I'll bet it's worth pounds."

"I'll have it you when I die, Paul," said Fanny, half-joking.

"You look just like somebody else, when drying their hair," said one of the girls in the long-legged landlady.

Fanny was awfully sensitive, always imagining tricks. Polly was neat and business-like. The two departments were far over at war, and Paul was always finding Fanny in tears. Then he was made the recipient of all her woes, and he had to plead his cause with Polly.

So the time went along happily enough. The factory had a healthy fall. No one was wanted or driven. Paul always enjoyed

it when the work got finer, the day got finer, and all the sun-  
beams in labour. His hand to-work on little wheels at work. The  
more was the work, and the work was the more, no thing, for the  
time being. It was different with the girls. The real woman never  
seemed to be short or too much, but as if left out, waiting.

From the train going home at night he used to watch the lights  
of the town, sprinkled dark on the hills, fading together in a blur  
in the night. He felt each in life and happy. Down any farther off,  
there was a patch of light at Dulwich like my red pencil stains on  
the ground, from the steel stars, and beyond was the red glow of  
the lanterns, playing like fire beneath on the clouds.

He had to walk two and more miles from Kenne house, up two  
long hills, down two short hills. He was often tired, and he wanted  
the lamps climbing the hill above him, how many more to pass.  
And from the hilltop, on pitch-dark nights, he looked round on  
the village five or six miles away, that showed like masses of glimmer-  
ing living things, almost a heaven against his feet. Madport and  
Hemmer scattered the far-off darkness with brilliance. And  
occasionally, the black valley, open between was traced, marked  
by a great train making south to London or north to Scotland. The  
train moved by like people on foot on the darkness, turning and  
turning, making the valley ring with their passage. They were  
gone, and the lights of the town and villages glowed in silence.

And then he came to the corner at home, which faced the other  
side of the night. The hill-top seemed a friend now. His mother  
sat with gladness as he entered. He put his eight shillings  
proudly on the table.

"I'll help, mother!" he asked weakly.

"There's pen and ink left," she answered, "after your toilet  
and dinner and such are taken off."

Then he told her the budget of the day. His life-story, like an  
Arabian Nights, was told night after night to his mother. It was  
almost as if it were her own life.

### *Death in the Family*

ARTHUR MILES was growing up. He was a quick, careless, impulsive boy, a good deal like his father. His hated study, made a great mean of he had to work, and escaped as soon as possible to his sport again.

In appearance he remained the flower of the family, being well made, graceful, and full of life. His dark brown hair and fresh coloring, and his exquisite dark blue eyes shaded with long lashes, together with his generous manner and fiery temper, made him a favorite. But as he grew older his temper became uncertain. He few once again over nothing, seemed unbearably raw and irritable.

His mother, whom he loved, worried of him sometimes. He thought only of himself. When he wanted amusement, all that stood in his way he hated, even if it were she. When he was in trouble he resented to her constantly.

"Goodness, boy!" she said, when he grumbled about a master who, he said, hated him, "if you don't like it, alter it, and if you can't alter it, put up with it."

And his father, whom he had loved and who had worshipped him, he came to detest. As he grew older Miles fell into a slow ruin. His body, which had been beautiful in movement and in being, shrunk, did not seem to ripen with the years, but to get mean and rather despicable. There came over him a look of meanness and of pettiness. And when the mean-looking elderly man talked or ordered the boy about, Arthur was furious. Moreover, Miles's manners got worse and worse, his habits more and more disgusting. When the children were growing up and in the cruel rage of adolescence, the father was like some ugly witness to their sins. His reactions in the house were the same as he used among the coffin down pit.

"Dirty creature!" Arthur would cry, jumping up and going straight out of the house when his father disgusted him. And Miles persecuted the more because his children hated it. He seemed to take a kind of satisfaction in disgusting them, and driving them madly mad, while they were so irritably sensitive at the age of fifteen or sixteen. So that Arthur, who was growing up when his father was disgusting and childlike, hated him more of all.



Then, sometimes, the father would seem to feel the contemporary hatred of his children.

"That's not a man even harder for his family!" he would shout. "He does his best for them, and then you treated like a dog. But I'm not going to stand it, I tell you!"

But for the threat and the fact that he did not try to hard as he imagined, they would have felt sorry. As it was, the battle now went on steadily all between father and children, he persisting in his dirty and disgusting ways, just to assert his independence. They hated him.

Arthur was so influenced and irritable at last, that when he won a scholarship for the Grammar School in Northampton, his mother decided to let him live in town, with one of her sisters, and only come home at week-ends.

Arnet was still a junior teacher in the Board-school, earning about four shillings a week. But soon she would have fifteen shillings, once she had passed her examinations, and there would be financial peace in the house.

Mrs. Morel clung now to Paul. He was quiet and not brilliant. But still he stuck to his painting, and still he stuck to his mother. Everything he did was for her. She waited for his coming home in the evening, and then she unburdened herself of all she had perceived, or of all that had occurred to her during the day. He sat and listened with his motherhood. The two shared love.

William was engaged now to his betrothed, and had bought her an engagement ring that cost eight guineas. The children gaped at such a fabulous price.

"Eight guineas!" said Morel. "More! but kind! If it'd give me some m't, it 'ud be' looked better on 'em."

"Gives you none of it!" cried Mrs. Morel. "Why give you some of it?"

She remembered he had bought no engagement ring at all, and she preferred William, who was not mean, if he were foolish. But now the young man talked only of the dances to which he went with his betrothed, and the different splendid dresses she wore; or he told his mother with glee how they went to the theatre like great lords.

He wanted to bring the girl home. Mrs. Morel said she should treat at the Christmas. Then that William arrived with a lady, but with no presents. Mrs. Morel had prepared supper. Hearing footsteps, she ran and went to the door. William entered.

"Hello, mother!" He kissed her hands, then came aside to greet a tall, handsome girl, who was wearing a costume of blue duck and white cloth, and him.

"Here's Gyp!"

Miss Watson held out her hand and showed her teeth in a small smile.

"Oh, how do you do, Mrs. Mord?" she murmured.

"I am afraid you will be hungry," said Mrs. Mord.

"Oh yes, we had dinner in the train. Have you got any pie or, Gosh?"

William Mord, big and raw-boned, looked at her quickly.

"How should I?" he said.

"Then I've lost them. Don't be cross with us."

A brown veal over his face, but he said nothing. She glanced round the kitchen. It was small and curved in her, with its glittering hanging-bunch, its easements behind the pantries, its wooden chairs and brick deal table. At that moment Mord came in.

"Hello, dad!"

"Hello, my son! That's let us out!"

The two stuck hands, and William pronounced the lady. She gave the same smile that showed her teeth.

"How do you do, Mrs. Mord?"

Mord bowed obsequiously.

"I'm very well, and I hope so are you. You must make yourself very welcome."

"Oh, thank you," she replied, rather amused.

"You will like to go upstairs," said Mrs. Mord.

"If you don't mind; but not if it is any trouble to you."

"It is no trouble, Anne will take you. Wake, carry up the box."

"And don't be at home dressing yourself up," said William to his betrothed.

Anne took a brass candlestick, and, too shy almost to speak, preceded the young lady to the front bedroom, which Mr. and Mrs. Mord had reserved for her. It, too, was small and cold by candle-light. The ceiling was only as fine as bedrooms in case of sickness then.

"Shall I unstrap the box?" asked Anne.

"Oh, thank you very much."

Anne played the part of maid, then went downstairs for hot water.

"I think she's rather good, mother," said William. "It's a tough journey and we had such a rush."

"Is there anything I can give her?" asked Mrs. Mord.

"Oh no, she'll be all right."

But there was a chill in the atmosphere. After half an hour

the television came down, having put on a purplish-colored dress, very nice for the collar's lichen.

"I told you you'd no need to change," said William to her.

"Oh, Charles!" Then she turned with that wretched smile to Mrs. Mord. "Don't you think he's always grumbling, Mrs. Mord?"

"Is he?" said Mrs. Mord. "That's not very nice of her."

"It isn't, really?"

"You are cold," said the mother. "Won't you come near the fire?"

Mord jumped out of his armchair.

"Come and sit you here!" he cried. "Close and sit you here!"

"No, dad, keep your own chair. Sit on the sofa, Gyp," said William.

"No, no!" cried Mord. "The chair's warmest. Come and sit here, Mrs. Weston!"

"Thank you so much," said the girl, seating herself in the collar's arm-chair, the place of honor. She shivered, feeling the warmth of the lichen penetrate her.

"Fetch me a kersey, Charles dear!" she said, putting up her mouth to him, and using the same intimate tone as if they were alone; which made the rest of the family feel as if they ought not to be present. This young lady evidently did not realize there is people, they were creatures to her like the persons. William shivered.

In such a household, in Savannah, Mrs. Weston would have been a lady confounding to her inferiors. These people were to her, certainly dwarfs—in short, the working class. How are she to adjust herself?

"I'll go," said Annie.

Mrs. Weston took no notice, as if a servant had spoken. But when the girl came downstairs again with the handkerchief, she said, "Oh, thank you!" in a gracious way.

She sat and talked about the dinner on the train, which had been so peary, about London, about dances. She was really very nervous, and shivered from fear. Mord sat off the time smoking his black twist tobacco, watching her, and listening to her glib London speech, as he pulled. Mrs. Mord, dooped up in her best black silk blouse, answered quickly and rather briefly. The three children sat round in silence and admiration. Mrs. Weston was the petriest. Everything of the host was got out for her: the best cage, the best spoon, the best tablecloth, the best coffee-pot. The children thought she must find it quite good. She let

strange, not able to realize the people, not knowing how to treat them. William joined, and was slightly uncomfortable.

"At about ten o'clock he said to her:

"Anne's you need, Gyp?"

"Father, Christine," she answered, at once in the Indian tone and putting her head slightly on one side.

"I'll light her the candle, mother," he said.

"Very well," replied the mother.

Miss Western stood up, held out her hand to Miss Morel.

"Good night, Mrs. Morel," she said.

Paul sat at the table, letting the water run from the tap into a new beer-bottle. Anne washed the bottle in an old flannel rag, and laid her mother good night. She was to share the room with the lady, because the house was full.

"You wait a minute," said Mrs. Morel to Anne. And Anne sat mending the hot-water bottle. Miss Western shook hands all round, to everybody's discomfort, and took her departure, preceded by William. In five minutes he was downstairs again. His heart was rather sore; he did not know why. He talked very little all everybody had gone to bed, but himself and his mother. Then he sat up with his legs apart, in his old attitude on the hearth-rug, and said hesitatingly:

"Well, mother?"

"Well, my son?"

She sat in the rocking-chair, feeling somehow hurt and humiliated, for his sake.

"Do you like her?"

"Yes," came the slow answer.

"She's shy yet, mother. She's not used to it. It's different from her aunt's house, you know."

"Of course it is, my boy; and she must find it difficult."

"She does." Then he frowned sadly. "If only she wouldn't put on her blase air!"

"It's only her first awkwardness, my boy. She'll be all right."

"That's it, mother," he replied painfully. But his brow was gloomy. "You know, she's not like you, mother. She's not serious, and she can't think."

"She's young, my boy."

"Yes; and she's had no sort of show. Her mother died when she was a child. Since then she's lived with her aunt, whom she can't bear. And her father was a rake. She's had no love."

"Not? Well you must make up to her."

"And so—you have to forgive her a lot of things."

"What do you have to forgive her, my boy?"

" I *know*. When she seems shallow, you have to remember she's never had anybody to bring her deeper side out. And she's awfully kind of us."

" Awfully can see that."

" But you know, mother—she's—she's different from us. These sort of people, like those she lives amongst, they don't seem to have the same preoccupies."

" You mustn't judge too harshly," said Mrs. Morel.

But he seemed uneasy within himself.

In the morning, however, he was up singing and looking round the house.

" Hello!" he called, stirring on the stairs. " Are you getting up?"

" Yes," her voice called faintly.

" Merry Christmas!" he shouted to her.

Her laugh, pretty and twinkling, was heard in the bedroom. She did not come down in half an hour.

" Was she really getting up with the rest she was?" he asked of Annie.

" Yes, she was," replied Annie.

He walked round, then went to the stairs again.

" Happy New Year," he called.

" Thank you, Chubby dear!" came the laughing voice, far away.

" Back up!" he implored.

It was nearly an hour, and still he was waiting for her. Morel, who always rose before six, looked at the clock.

" Well, it's a wonder!" he exclaimed.

The family had breakfasted, all but William. He went to the foot of the stairs.

" Shall I have to send you an Easter egg up there?" he called, rather queerly. She only laughed. The family expected, after that sort of preparation, something like rump. At last she came, looking very nice in a blue and white.

" Have you really been all this time getting ready?" he asked.

" Chubby dear! That question is not permitted, is it, Mrs. Morel?"

She played the grand lady at first. When she went with William to chapel, he in his frock coat and silk hat, she in her fur and London-made costume, Paul and Arthur and Annie expected everybody to bow to the ground in admiration. And indeed, standing in his Sunday suit at the end of the road, watching the gallant pair go, his father was the father of princes and princesses.

And yet she was not so grand. For a year now she had been a sort of secretary or clerk in a London office. But while she was

with the Misses she questioned it. She sat up and let Annie or Paul wait on her as if they were her servants. She treated Mrs. Moor with a certain gloom and Mabel with patronage. But after a day or so she began to change her tune.

William always wanted Paul or Annie to go along with them on their visits. It was so much more interesting. And Paul really did adore "Gyp," wholeheartedly, so that, his mother earnestly begged the boy for the adulation with which he treated the girl. — On the second day, when Lily said, "Oh, Anna, do you know what I left my maid?" William replied:

"You know it is in your bedroom. Why do you ask Anna?"

And Lily went upstairs with a cross, shut mouth. But it appeared the young man that she made a servant of his sister.

On the third evening William and Lily were sitting together in the parlor by the fire in the dark. At a quarter to eleven Mrs. Moor was heard rattling the fire. William came out to the kitchen, followed by his beloved.

"Is it as late as that, mother?" he said. She had been sitting alone.

"It is not late, my boy, but it is as late as I usually sit up."

"Won't you go to bed, then?" he asked.

"And leave you two? No, my boy, I don't believe in it."

"Can't you trust us, mother?"

"Whether I can or not, I won't do it. You can stay all night if you like, and I can read."

"Go to bed, Gyp," he said to his girl. "We won't keep mother waiting."

"Anna has left the candle burning, Lily," said Mrs. Moor.

"I think you will see."

"Yes, thank you. Good-night, Mrs. Moor."

William kissed his sweetheart at the foot of the stairs, and she went. He returned to the kitchen.

"Can't you trust us, mother?" he repeated, rather offended.

"My boy, I tell you I don't believe in leaving two young things like you alone downstairs when everyone else is in bed."

And he was forced to take this answer. He liked his mother good-night.

At Easter he came over alone. And then he discussed his misbehavior coolly with his mother.

"You know, mother, when I'm away from her I don't care for her a bit. I shouldn't care if I never saw her again. But then, when I'm with her in the evenings I get awfully fond of her."

"It's a queer sort of love to marry on," said Mrs. Moor, "if she holds you no more than that?"

"It is funny!" he exclaimed. It worried and perplexed him. "But yet—there's so much between us now I couldn't give her up."

"You know best," said Mrs. Mabel. "But if it is as you say, I wouldn't risk it—even at any rate, it doesn't look much like it."

"Oh, I don't know, mother. She's an orphan, and—"

They never came to any sort of conclusion. He seemed puzzled and rather fretted. She was rather reserved. All his strength and energy went in keeping the girl. He tried strenuously all round to make his mother in Newborough when he came over.

Paul's wages had been raised at Christmas to ten shillings, to his great joy. He was quite happy at Jordan's, but his health suffered from the long hours and the confinement. His mother, to whom he became more and more significant, thought how to help.

His half-day holiday was on Monday afternoon. On a blinding morning in May, as the two sat alone at breakfast, she said:

"I think it will be a fine day."

He looked up in surprise. This meant something.

"You know Mr. Lawrence has gone to live on a new farm. Well, he asked me last week if I wouldn't go and see Mrs. Lawrence, and I promised to bring you on Monday if it's fine. Shall we go?"

"I say, little woman, how lovely!" he cried. "And we'll go this afternoon!"

Paul started off to the station jubilant. Down Derby Road was a cherry-tree that glowered. The old brick wall by the pasture ground burned scarlet, spring was a very flame of green. And the steep sweep of highway lay, in its cool morning dust, spangled with patterns of sunbats and shadow, perfectly still. The moss-sloped little great green shoulders proudly, and made the warthouses all the morning, the boy had a vision of going outside.

When he came home at dinner-time his mother was rather excited.

"Are we going?" he asked.

"When I'm ready," she replied.

Frenziedly he got up.

"Go and get dressed while I wash up," he said.

She did so. He washed the pots, unrighteously, and then took her bath. They were quite alone. Mrs. Mabel was one of those naturally acquiescent people who can wait in mood without desiring their share. But Paul had no claim there for her. They were half-boats at eight shillings a pair. He, however, thought them the most dainty boats in the world, and he cleaned them with as much reverence as if they had been flowers.

Suddenly she appeared in the inner doorway rather shyly. She

had got a new cotton blouse on. Paul jumped up and went forward.

"Oh, my dear!" he exclaimed. "What a lolly-dollard!"

She smiled in a little naughty way, and put her hand up.

"It's not a lolly-dollard at all!" she replied. "It's very quiet."

She walked forward, whilst he hovered round her.

"Well," she asked, quite shy, but pretending to be high and mighty, "do you like it?"

"Awfully!" You are a fine little woman to go prancing out with!"

He went and surveyed her from the back.

"Well," he said, "if I was walking down the street behind you, I should say, 'Doesn't that little person fancy herself?'"

"Well, she doesn't," replied Miss Mowd. "She's not sure it suits her."

"Oh no! she wants to be in dirty black, looking as if she was wrapped in brown paper. It does not you, and I say you look nice."

She smiled in her little way, pleased, but pretending to know better.

"Well," she said, "it's not as just three shillings. You couldn't have got it ready-made for that price, could you?"

"I should think you couldn't," he replied.

"And, you know, it's good stuff."

"Awfully pretty," he said.

The blouse was white, with a little splash of blue-green and black.

"Too young for me, though, I'm afraid," she said.

"Too young for you!" he exclaimed in danger. "Why don't you buy some like white hair and stick it on your head?"

"I've even have no coal," she replied. "I'm going where far enough."

"Well, you've no business to," he said. "What do I want with a white-haired mackerel?"

"I'm afraid you'll have to put up with one, my lad," she said rather strongly.

They set off in great style, she carrying the umbrellas William had given her, because of the sun. Paul was considerably taller than she, though he was not big. He flanked himself.

On the fellow land the young wheat stood stiffly. Mares plowed in phantoms of white steam, coughed, and rumbled hoarsely.

"Now look at that!" said Mrs. Mowd. Mother and son stood on the road to watch. Along the ridge of the great peat-bail crawled a little group in silhouette against the sky, a horse, a small tractor, and a man. They climbed the incline against the horizon. At



the end the man tipped the waggons. There was an anchor rattle as the waste fell down the sheer slope of an enormous bank.

"You sit a minute, mother," he said, and she took a seat on a bank, whilst he sketched rapidly. She was silent whilst he worked, looking round at the altitudes, the red cottages shining among their greenness.

"The world is a wonderful place," she said, "and wonderfully beautiful."

"And so's the pot," he said. "Look how it keeps together, like something alive almost—a big creature that you don't know."

"Yes," she said. "Perhaps!"

"And all the tracks standing waiting, like a string of beads to be fed," he said.

"And very thankful I am they are standing," she said, "for that means they'll turn maddening time this week."

"But I like the feel of men on things, while they're alive. There's a feel of men about tracks, because they've been handled with men's hands, all of them."

"Yes," said Mrs. Moor.

They went along under the trees of the highroad. He was constantly informing her, but she was interested. They passed the end of Northmore, that was tooting his machines like people lightly in his lap. Then they turned on a private road, and in some replication approached a big farm. A dog barked furiously. A woman came out to see.

"Is this the way to Willey Farm?" Mrs. Moor asked.

Paul hung behind in terror of being seen back. But the woman was amiable, and directed them. The mother and son went through the wheat and oats, over a little bridge onto a wild meadow. Ferns, with their white heads glancing, wheeled and screamed about them. The lake was still and blue. High overhead a heron flew. Opposite, the wood heaped on the hill, green and still.

"It's a wild road, mother," said Paul. "Just like Canada."

"Isn't it beautiful?" said Mrs. Moor, looking round.

"See that heron—we see her legs?"

He directed his mother, what she must see and what not. And she was quite content.

"But now," she said, "which way? She told me through the wood."

The wood, dense and dark, lay on their left.

"I can feel a bit of a path *the* wood," said Paul. "You've got seen her, somehow or other, you have."

They found a little gate, and soon were in a broad green alley

of the wood, with a new shank of its and pine on one hand, an old oak glade dipping down on the other. And among the oaks the blackbills stood in packs of six or eight, under the new green boughs, upon a pale fern floor of red-brown. He found flowers for her.

"Here's a bit of new-mown hay," he said, then, again, he brought her *Ko-pu-ma-vo-te*. And, again, his heart hurt with love, seeing her head, used with work, holding the little bunch of flowers he gave her. She was perfectly happy.

But at the end of the riding was a fence to climb. Paul was ever in a hurry.

"Come," he said, "let me help you."

"No, go away. I will do it at my own way."

He stood below with his hands up ready to help her. She climbed cautiously.

"What a way to climb!" he exclaimed scornfully, when she was safely on earth again.

"Rascals! rascals!" she cried.

"Duffer of a little woman," he replied, "who can't get over 'em."

In front, along the edge of the wood, was a cluster of low red farm buildings. The two hastened forward. Flush with the wood was the apple orchard, where blossom was falling on the grass-trees. The pond was deep under a hedge and overhanging oak-trees. Some oaks stood in the shade. The farm and buildings, three sides of a quadrangle, embraced the sunshine towards the wood. It was very still.

Mother and son went into the small walled garden, where was a sort of red gillivens. By the open door were some heavy leaves, put out to cool. A hen was just coming to peck them. Then, in the doorway suddenly appeared a girl in a dirty apron. She was about fourteen years old, had a raw dark face, a bunch of short black curls, very fine and fine, and dark eyes; shy, questioning, a little miserable of the manner, she disappeared. In a minute another figure appeared, a small, frail woman, corp, with great dark-lashed eyes.

"Oh!" she exclaimed, smiling with a little glow, "you're come, then, I am glad to see you." Her voice was intimate and rather sad.

The two women shook hands.

"How are you? are we're not a bother to you?" said Mrs. Moor.

"I know what a blessing life is."

"Oh no! We're only too thankful to see a new face, it's to be up him."

"I suppose so," said Mrs. Moor.

They were taken through into the parlor—a long, low room, with a great bunch of garden-cress in the fireplace. There the women talked, while Paul went out to survey the land. He was in the garden smelling the gillflowers and looking at the plants, when the girl came out quickly to the heap of coal which stood by the door.

"I suppose these are cabbage-roots?" he said to her, pointing to the bushes along the fence.

She looked at him with startled, big brown eyes.

"I suppose they are cabbage-roots when they come out?" he said.

"I don't know," she faltered. "They're white with pink middles."

"Then they're maiden-blush."

Miriam flushed. She had a beautiful warm coloring.

"I don't know," she said.

"You don't have much in your garden," he said.

"That is our first year here," she answered, in a distant, rather superior way, drawing back and going indoors. He did not retire, but went his round of exploration. Presently his mother came out, and they went through the backlogs. Paul was hugely delighted.

"And I suppose you have the flesh and silver and pigs to look after?" said Mrs. Mord to Mrs. Levens.

"No," replied the little woman. "I can't find time to look after cattle, and I've not used to it. It's as much as I can do to keep going in the house."

"Well, I suppose it is," said Mrs. Mord.

Presently the girl came out.

"Yes is ready, mother," said she in a casual, quiet voice.

"Oh, thank you, Miriam, then we'll come," replied her mother, almost ingratiatingly. "Would you care to have tea now, Mrs. Mord?"

"Of course," said Mrs. Mord. "Whoever it's ready."

Paul and his mother and Mrs. Levens had sat together. Then they went out into the wood that was flooded with blackbills, while Harry forget-me-nots were in the park. The mother and son were as noisy as before.

When they got back to the house, Mr. Levens and Edgar, the eldest son, were in the kitchen. Edgar was about eighteen. Then Geoffrey and Maurice, big lads of twelve and thirteen, were in front of him. Mr. Levens was a good-looking man in the prime of life, with a golden-brown moustache, and blue eyes screwed up against the weather.

The boys were condescending, but Paul scarcely observed it

They were round for eggs, scrambling into all sorts of places. As they were feeding the hen's Miriam came out. The boys took no notice of her. One hen, with her yellow chickens, was in a coop. Maurice took his hand full of corn and let the hen peck from it.

"Doesn't you do it?" he asked of Paul.

"Let's see," said Paul.

He had a small barrel, woven, and rather capable-looking. Miriam watched. He held the corn in the hen. The bird eyed it with her hard, bright eye, and suddenly made a peck into his hand. He started, and laughed. "Rap, rap, rap!" went the bird's beak in his palm. He laughed again, and the other boys joined.

"She knows you, and nips you, but she never hurts," said Paul, when the last corn had gone.

"Now, Miriam," said Maurice, "you come an' 'ave a go."

"No," the maid, shrinking back.

"Had baby. The sturdy-lad!" said her brother.

"It doesn't hurt a bit," said Paul. "It only just nips rather nicely."

"No," she still cried, shaking her black curls and shrinking.

"She doesn't," said Geoffrey. "She never dares do anything except peck your nose."

"Doesn't jump-off a gate, doesn't needle, doesn't go on a slide, doesn't stop a girl hatin' her. She can do nowt but go about thinkin' herself somebody. 'The Lady of the Lake' Yeh!" cried Maurice.

Miriam was crimson with shame and misery.

"I dare do more than you," she cried. "You're never anything but cowards and bullies."

"Oh, cowards and bullies!" they repeated, merrily, mocking her speech.

"Now such a clown shall anger me,  
A boor is answered slowly."

he quoted against her, shouting with laughter.

She went indoors. Paul went with the boys into the orchard, where they had rigged up a parallel bar. They did from strength. He was more agile than strong, but he screwed. He figured a piece of apple-blossom that hung low on a swinging bough.

"I wouldn't get the apple-blossom," said Edgar, the eldest brother. "There'll be no apples next year."

"I wasn't going to get it," replied Paul, going away.

The boys did handle so busy; they were more interested in their own pursuits. He wandered back to the house to look for his mother. As he went round the back, he saw Miriam kneeling in

front of the hen-coop, some water in her hand, biting her lip, and crouching in an intense attitude. The hen was cying her wickedly. Very gingerly she put forward her hand. The hen looked for her. She drew back quickly with a cry, half of fear, half of chagrin.

"It won't hurt you," said Paul.

She flushed crimson and started up.

"I only wanted to try," she said in a low voice.

"See, it doesn't hurt," he said, and putting only two corns in his palm, he let the hen peck, peck, peck at his bare hand.

"It only makes you laugh," he said.

She put her hand forward, and dragged it away, tried again, and started back with a cry. He frowned.

"Why, I'd let her take corn from my hand," said Paul, "only she bumps a bit. She's ever so mean. She's won't, look how much ground she'd peck up every day."

He waited patiently, and watched. At last Martha let the bird peck from her hand. She gave a little cry—fear and pain because of fear—rather pathetic. But she had done it, and she did it again.

"There, you see," said the boy. "It doesn't hurt, does it?"

She looked at him with dilated dark eyes.

"No," she laughed, trembling.

Then she rose and went indoors. She seemed to be in some way startled of the boy.

"He thinks I'm only a common girl," she thought, and she wanted to prove she was a grand person like the "Lady of the Lake."

Paul found his mother ready to go home. She smiled on her son. He took a great bunch of flowers. His and Miss Lohman walked down the fields with them. The hills were golden with evening; deep in the wood showed the darkening purple of bluebells. It was everywhere perfectly still, even for the rustling of leaves and birds.

"But it is a beautiful place," said Mrs. March.

"Yes," answered Mr. Lohman. "it's a nice little place, if only it weren't for the rabbits. The pasture's bitten down to nothing I dream of ever I'll get the rats off it."

He clapped his hands, and the field broke into masses near the woods, brown rabbits hopping everywhere.

"Would you believe it?" exclaimed Mrs. March.

She and Paul went on alone together.

"Wasn't it lovely, mother?" he said quietly.

A thin moon was coming out. His heart was full of happiness all at heart. His mother had no chatter, because she, too, wanted to cry with happiness.

"Now wouldn't I help that man?" she said. "Wouldn't I run to the birds and the young stock? And I'd be in with, and I'd talk with him, and I'd play with him. My word, if I were his wife, the farm would be mine, I know! But there, she hasn't the strength—she couldn't have the strength. She ought never to have been burdened but at, you know. I am sorry for her, and I'm sorry for her son. My word, if I'd had him, I shouldn't have thought him a bad husband! Not that she does as her; and she's very lovable."

William came home again with his wife and at the Whitnash sale. He had one week of his holidays then. It was beautiful weather. As a rule, William and Lily and Paul went out in the evening together for a walk. William did not talk to his beloved much, except to tell her things from his husband. Paul talked endlessly to both of them. They lay down, all three, in a meadow by Martin Church. On one side, by the Gude Farm, was a beautiful growing avenue of poplars. Here and there was dropping from the heights, penny daisies and ragged robin were in the field, like daisies. William, a big fellow of twenty-three, thence now and then a bit gaunt, lay back in the sunbath and dreamed while she fingered with his hair. Paul was gathering the big daisies. She had taken off her hat, her hair was black as a horse's mane. Paul came back and threaded daisies in her jet-black hair—big sprays of white and yellow, and just a pink touch of ragged robin.

"Now you look like a young wood-woman," the boy said to her. "Doesn't she, William?"

Lily laughed. William opened his eyes and looked at her. In his gaze was a certain halfed look of misery and fierce apprehension.

"Has he made a right of me?" she asked, laughing down on her lover.

"That he has!" said William, smiling.

He looked at her. His brow was set as hurt him. He glanced at her flower-decked head and frowned.

"You look nice enough, if that's what you want to know," he said.

And she walked without her hat. In a little while William recovered, and was rather tender to her. Coming to a bridge, he carved her initials and his in a heart.

L. S. 10.

W. S.

She watched his strong, narrow hand, with its gleaming hair and wrinkles, as he carved, and she seemed fascinated by it.

All the time there was a feeling of sadness and weariness, and a

certain tenderness in the house, whilst William and Lily were at home. But often he got irritated. She had brought, for an eight-days' stay, five dresses and six blouses.

"Oh, would you mind," she said to Anne, "washing out those two blouses, and those things?"

And Anne stood washing, when William and Lily went out the next morning. Mrs. Moor was furious. And sometimes the young man, catching a glimpse of his mother-in-law's attitude towards his sister, hated her.

On Sunday morning she looked very beautiful in a dress of faded, silky and swaying, and blue as a jay-bird's feather, and in a large cream hat covered with many roses, mostly crimson. Nobody could admire her enough. But in the evening, when she was going out, she asked again:

"Charles, have you got my gloves?"

"What?" asked William.

"My new black silk."

"No."

There was a hum. She had lost them.

"Look here, mother," said William, "that's the fourth pair she's lost since Christmas—at five shillings a pair!"

"Yes, only gave me two of them," she complained.

And in the evening, after supper, he stood on the hearth-rug whilst she sat on the sofa, and he seemed to hate her. In the chamber he had left her whilst he went to see some old friend. She had sat looking at a book. After supper William wanted to write a letter.

"Here is your book, Lily," said Mrs. Moor. "Would you care to go on with it for a few minutes?"

"No, thank you," said the girl. "I will do with."

"But it is so dull."

William scribbled irritably at a great rate. As he ended the envelope he said:

"Read a book! Why, she's never read a book in her life."

"Oh, go along!" said Mrs. Moor, cross with the exaggeration.

"It's true, mother—she hasn't," he cried, jumping up and taking his old position on the hearth-rug. "She's never read a book in her life."

"It's like me," cried in Moor. "You cannot see what there is in books, for you begin your nose in 'em first, not where you read."

"But you shouldn't say those things," said Mrs. Moor to her son.

"But it's true, mother—she can't read. What did you give her?"

"Well, I gave her a little thing of Anne Swan's. *Melancholy* wants to read dry stuff on Sunday afternoon."

"Well, I'll let her didn't read too late of it."

"You are ridiculous," said his mother.

All the time Lily sat rapturously on the sofa. He turned to her within

"Did you read any?" he asked.

"Yes, I did," she replied.

"How much?"

"I don't know how many pages."

"Tell me one thing you read."

She could not.

She never got beyond the second page. He read a great deal, and had a quick, active intelligence. She could understand nothing but love-making and chatter. He was accustomed to having all his thoughts sifted through his mother's mind, so, when he wanted companionship, and was asked in reply to be the killing and wounding lover, he hated his betrothed.

"You know, mother," he said, when he was alone with her at night, "there's no idea of money, she's so weak-brained. When she's paid, she'll suddenly buy such rot as novel glass, and then I have to buy her music-tickets, and her meals, even her underclothing. And she wants to get married, and I think myself we might as well get married next year. But at this expense!"

"A fine idea of a marriage it would be," replied his mother. "I should consider it again, my boy."

"Oh, well, I've gone too far to break off now," he said, "and so I shall get married as soon as I can."

"Very well, my boy. If you will, you will, and there's no stopping you; but I tell you, I can't sleep when I think about it."

"Oh, she'll be all right, mother. We shall manage."

"And the less you buy her underclothing?" asked his mother.

"Well," he began apologetically, "she didn't ask me; but one morning—and it was cold—I found her on the station shivering, not able to keep still, so I asked her if she was well wrapped up like that. 'I think so.' So I said: 'Have you got warm underthings on?' And she said: 'No, they were cotton.' I asked her why on earth she hadn't got something thicker on in weather like that, and she said because she had nothing. And there she is—a beautiful subject! I had to take her and get some warm things. Well, mother, I shouldn't mind the money if we had any. And, you know, she ought to keep enough to pay for her music-tickets, but no, she comes to me about that, and I have to find the money."

"It's a poor lookout," said Mrs. Morel bitterly.



He was pale, and his rugged face, that used to be so perfectly content and laughing, was stamped with conflict and despair.

"But I can't give her up now, it's gone too far," he said. "And besides, for new things I couldn't do without her."

"My love, remember you're taking your life in your hands," said Mrs. Morel. "Living is as bad as a marriage that's a hopeless failure. Mine was bad enough, God knows, and ought to teach you something, but it might have been worse by a long chalk."

He leaned with his back against the side of the chimney-piece, his hands in his pockets. He was a big, raw-boned man, who looked as if he would go to the world's end if he wanted to. But there was the despair on his face.

"I couldn't give her up now," he said.

"Well," she said, "remember there are worse wrongs than breaking off an engagement."

"I can't give her up now," he said.

The clock ticked on; another and now remained in silence, a conflict between them, but he would say no more. At last she said:

"Well, go to bed, my son. You'll feel better in the morning, and perhaps you'll know better."

He kissed her, and went. She raked the fire. Her heart was heavy now as it had never been. Before, with her husband, things had seemed to be breaking down to him, but they did not destroy her power to live. Now her soul felt lamed in itself. It was her hope that was struck.

And so often William manifested the same hatred towards his betrothed. On the last evening at home he was raking against her.

"Well," he said, "if you don't believe me, what else's like, would you believe she has been confirmed three times?"

"Nonsense!" laughed Mrs. Morel.

"Nonsense or not, she has! That's what confirmation means for her—a bit of a theatrical show where she can cut a figure."

"I haven't, Mrs. Morel!" cried the girl—"I haven't! it is not true!"

"What?" he cried, flushing round on her. "Once in Bromley, once at Beckenham, and once somewhere else?"

"Nowhere else!" she said, in terror—"nowhere else!"

"Is not? And if it wasn't, who were you confirmed near?"

"Once I was only fourteen, Mrs. Morel," she pleaded, tears in her eyes.

"Yes," said Mrs. Morel. "I can quite understand it, child. Take no notice of him. You ought to be ashamed, William, saying such things."

"But it's true. She's ridging—she had blue velvet Prayer-Books—and she's not at much religion, or anything else, as her share that ridging. Guss condemned them men for share, to share herself off, and that's how she is in anything—anything!"

The girl sat on the sofa, crying. She was not strong.

"As for her?" he cried, "you might as well ask a fly to love you! It'll last sitting on you—"

"Now, say no more," commanded Miss Mabel. "If you want to my share things, you must find another place than this. I am ashamed of you William! Why don't you be more manly. To do nothing but find fault with a girl, and then pretend you're engaged to her!"

Miss Mabel subsided in wrath and indignation.

William was silent, and later he repeated, loved and comforted the girl. Yet it was true, what he had said. He hated her.

When they were going away, Miss Mabel accompanied them as far as Nottingham. It was a long way to Kinson station.

"You know, mother," he said to her, "Gyp's shallow. Nothing goes deep with her."

"William, I wish you wouldn't say those things," said Miss Mabel, very uncomfortable for the girl who walked beside her.

"But it doesn't, mother. She's very much in love with me now, but if I died she'd have forgotten me in three months."

Miss Mabel was afraid. Her heart beat furiously, hearing the quiet bitterness of her son's last speech.

"How do you know?" she replied. "You don't know, and therefore you've no right to say such a thing."

"He's always saying those things!" cried the girl.

"In three months after I was hated you'd have forgotten me, and I should be forgotten," he said. "And that's your love!"

Miss Mabel saw them into the train at Nottingham, then she returned home.

"That's no comfort," she said to Paul—"he'll never have any money to marry on, that I am sure of. And so she'll care him that way!"

In the next hour Mabel was not yet very depressed. She finally believed William would never marry his Gyp. She waited, and she kept Paul near to her.

All summer long William's letters had a fervent tone; he seemed unusual and intense. Sometimes he was magnificently jolly, usually he was flat and bitter in his letters.

"Ay," her mother said, "I'm afraid he's running himself against that creature, who isn't worthy of his love—no, no more than a rag doll."

He wanted to cheer home. The midsummer holiday was gone, it was a long while to Christmas. He wrote in wild excitement, saying he could come for Saturday and Sunday at Cloten Pier, the first week in October.

"You are not well, my boy," said his mother, when she saw him.

She was almost in tears at having him so herself again.

"No, I've not been well," he said. "I've seemed to have a dragging cold all the last month, but it's going, I think."

It was sunny October weather. He seemed wild with joy, like a schoolboy escaped; then again he was silent and reserved. He was more quiet than ever, and there was a haggard look in his eyes.

"You are doing too much," said his mother to him.

He was doing more work, trying to make some money to money on, he said. He only talked to his mother once on the Saturday night; then he was ind and tender about his beloved.

"And yet, you know, mother, for all that, if I died I'd be broken-hearted for two months, and then she'd start to forget me. You'd see, she'd never come home here to look at my grave, not even once."

"Why, William," said his mother, "you're not going to die, so why talk about it?"

"But whether or not——" he replied.

"And she can't help it. She is like that, and if you choose her—well, you can't grumble," said his mother.

On the Sunday morning, as he was putting his collar on:

"Look," he said to his mother, holding up his shirt, "what a rash my collar's made under my chin!"

Just at the junction of skin and throat was a big red inflammation.

"It ought not to do that," said his mother. "Here, put a bit of this soothing ointment on. You should wear different collars."

He went away on Sunday midnight, seeming better and more solid for his two days at home.

On Tuesday morning came a telegram from London that he was ill. Mrs. Mansel got off her knees from watching the floor, read the telegram, called a neighbour, went to her bedside and borrowed a coverlid, put on her things, and set off. She landed in Kenton, caught an express for London in Nottingham. She had to wait in Nottingham nearly an hour. A small figure in her black bonnet, she was anxiously asking the persons if they knew how to get to Euston Road. The journey was then home. She sat in her corner in a kind of stupor, never moving. At King's Cross still no one could tell her how to get to Euston Road. Carrying her string

bag, that contained her sashdons, comb and brush, she went from person to person. At last they sent her underground to Chancery Street.

It was six o'clock when she arrived at William's lodging. The lights were not down.

"How is he?" she asked.

"No better," said the landlady.

She followed the woman upstairs. William lay on the bed, with bloodshot eyes, his face rather discoloured. The clothes were tossed about, there was no fire in the room, a glass of milk stood on the stand at his bedside. He was fast asleep.

"Why, my son!" said the mother bravely.

He did not answer. He looked at her, but did not see her. Then he began to cry, in a dull voice, as if repeating a letter from dissection: "Owing to a laceration in the fold of the vocal, the sugar has set, and become converted into rock. It needed heating——"

He was quite unconscious. It had been his business to examine some such trays of sugar in the Port of London.

"How long has he been like this?" the mother asked the landlady.

"He got home at six o'clock on Monday morning, and he seemed to sleep all day; then at the night we heard him talking, and this morning he asked for you. So I wired, and we fetched the doctor."

"Will you have a doctor made?"

Mrs. Morel used to mother her son, to keep him still.

The doctor came. It was poisonous, and, he said, a peculiar epidemic, which had started under the skin where the collar chafed, and was spreading over the face. He hoped it would not get to the brain.

Mrs. Morel settled down to nurse. She prayed for William, prayed that he would recognise her. But the young man's face grew more discoloured. In the night she struggled with him. He raved, and raved, and would not come to consciousness. At two o'clock, in a dreadful perspiration, he died.

Mrs. Morel sat perfectly still for an hour in the lodging bedroom; then she roused the household.

At six o'clock, with the aid of the charwomen, she laid him out; then she went round the dirty London village to the register and the doctor.

At seven o'clock in the cottage on Bowgill Street came another wire.

"William died last night. Let father come, bring money."

Annie, Paul, and Arthur were at home; Mrs. Morel was gone to

with. The three children said not a word. Annie began to whisper with Kate, Paul set off for his father.

It was a beautiful day. As Friday got the white steam rolled steadily in the washes of a soft blue sky, the wheels of the head-trucks twinkled high up the screen, shuffling its road into the walls, made a busy noise.

"I want my father; he's got to go to London," said the boy on the first case he met on the bank.

"That wants Walter Moore? Or is there an' tell Joe Ward."

Paul went into the book-top office.

"I want my father; he's got to go to London."

"They say he's? Is he down? What's his name?"

"Mr. Moore."

"What, Walter? Is over and?"

"He's got to go to London."

The man went to the telephone and rang up the bottom office.

"Walter Moore's wanted. Number 42, Ward. Sawyer's room, there's his lad here."

Then he turned round to Paul.

"He'll be up in a few minutes," he said.

Paul wandered out to the gut-top. He watched the chair come up, with its waggons of coal. The great iron cage sank back on its rest, a full couple was hoisted off, an empty train ran on to the chair, a bell ringed somewhere, the chair hoisted, then dropped like a stone.

Paul did not realize William was dead; it was impossible, with such a battle going on. The puller-off swung the small track on to the turn-table, another man ran with it along the bank down the curving line.

"And William is dead, and my mother's in London, and what will she be doing?" the boy asked himself, as if it were a memorandum.

He watched their silver chair come up, and still no father. As he, standing beside a waggon, a man's form. The chair sank on its rest, Michael rapped off. He was slightly lame from an accident.

"Is it true, Paul? Is it worse?"

"You've got to go to London."

The two walked off the gut-bank, where men were working busily. As they came out and went along the railway, with the sunny screens fold on one side and a wall of tracks on the other, Moore said in a frightened voice:

"It's never gone, child?"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

The miner's voice was terrified.

"Last night. We had a telegram from my mother."

Morrel waited on a few strides, then leaned up against a truck seat, his hand over his eyes. He was not crying. Paul stood looking round, waiting. On the weighing-machine a truck trundled slowly. Paul saw everything, except his father leaning against the truck as if he were dead.

Morrel had only once before been in London. He set off, worried and pecked, to help his wife. That was on Tuesday. The children were left alone in the house. Paul went to work, Arthur went to school, and Anne had in a friend to be with her.

On Saturday night, as Paul was running the corner, coming home from Kewton, he saw his mother and father, who had come to Gentley Bridge Station. They were walking in silence in the dark, tired, struggling apart. The boy waited.

"Mother!" he cried, in the darkness.

Mrs. Morrel's small figure seemed not to observe. He spoke again.

"Paul!" she said, unhearingly.

She let him kiss her, but she turned away from him.

In the house she was the same—small, white, and mute. She noticed nothing, she said nothing, only:

"The coffin will be here to-morrow, Walter. You'd better see about some help." Then, turning to the children: "We're bringing him home."

Then she relaxed into the same mute looking into space, her hands folded on her lap. Paul, looking at her, felt he could not breathe. The house was dead there.

"I went to work, mother," he said plaintively.

"Did you?" she answered, dully.

After half an hour blind, troubled and bewildered, came in again.

"Where'll we lay him when he does come?" he asked his wife.

"In the front-room."

"Then I'd better shift the table?"

"Yes."

"Are his kin across the channel?"

"You know there— You, I suppose so."

Morrel and Paul went, with a candle, into the parlour. There was no gas there. The father uncovered the top of the big mahogany oval table, and cleared the middle of the room, then he arranged six chairs opposite each other, so that the coffin could stand on their backs.

"You must stand such a length as he is!" said the mother, and watching anxiously as he worked.

## DEATH IN THE FAMILY

Paul went to the bay window and looked out. The mid-tree equal moonlight and black in front of the wide darkness. It was a fairly luminous night. Paul went back to his mother.

At six o'clock Mord called

"She's here!"

Everyone started. There was a rust of unbuttoning and unlocking the front door, which opened straight from the night into the room.

"Bring another candle," called Mord.

Annie and Arthur went. Paul followed with his mother. He stood with his arm round her waist in the inner doorway. Down the middle of the cleared room went six chairs, five to five. In the window, against the lace curtains, Arthur held up one candle, and by the open door, against the night, Annie stood leaning forward, her brass candlestick pinning.

There was the noise of wheels. Outside in the darkness of the night below Paul could see horses and a black vehicle, one lamp and a few pale faces; then some men, women, all in clear shadow, seemed to struggle in the alternation. Presently two men appeared, bowed beneath a great weight. It was Mord and his neighbour.

"Steady!" called Mord, out of breath.

He and his fellow mounted the steep garden step, heaved into the candle-light with their gleaming coffin-cots. Loads of other men were seen struggling behind. Mord and Hans, in front, staggered; the great dark weight swung.

"Steady, steady!" cried Mord, as if in pain.

All the tin beams were up in the small garden, holding the great coffin aloft. There were three more steps to the door. The yellow lamp of the carriage shone alone down on the black road.

"Now dead!" said Mord.

The coffin swung, the men began to mount the three steps with their load. Annie's candle flickered, and she whispered to the first man appeared, and the first and bowed heads of six men struggled to climb from the room, bearing the coffin first rode like acorns on their living flesh.

"Oh, my son—my son!" Mrs. Mord sang softly, and each time the coffin swung to the universal shaking of the men: "Oh, my son—my son—my son!"

"Mother!" Paul whispered, his hand round her waist.

"Mother!"

She did not hear.

"Oh, my son—my son!" she repeated.

Paul saw drops of sweat fall from his father's brow. Six men were in the room—six coffin-men, with yielding, straggling backs, filling the room and knocking against the furniture. The coffin-voiced, and was gently lowered on to the chair. The worst fell from Mabel's face on its boards.

"My word, he's a weight!" said a man, and the five miners sighed, heaved, and, trembling with the struggle, descended the steps again, closing the door behind them.

The family was alone in the parlour with the great polished box. William, when laid out, was six feet four inches long. Like a monument lay the bright brown, ponderous coffin. Paul thought it would never be got out of the room again. The mother was rocking the polished wood.

They buried him on the Monday in the little cemetery on the hillside that looks over the fields at the big church and the houses. It was sunny, and the white churchwomen filled themselves in the warmth.

Mrs. Morel could not be persuaded, after this, to talk and take her old bright interest in life. She remained shut off. All the way home in the train she had said to herself: "If only it could have been me!"

When Paul came home at night he found his mother sitting, her day's work done, with hands folded in her lap upon her square apron. She always used to have changed her dress and put on a black apron, before. Now Annie set the supper, and his mother sat looking blankly in front of her, her mouth shut tight. Then he bent his head for some time to tell her.

"Mother, Mrs. Jordan was down to-day, and she said my sketch of a colliery at work was beautiful."

But Mrs. Morel took no notice. Night after night he forced himself to tell her things, although she did not listen. It drove him almost insane to have her there. At last:

"What's a matter, mother?" he asked.

"She did not hear."

"What's a matter?" he persisted. "Mother, what's a matter?"

"You know what's the matter," she said irritably, turning away.

The lad—she was sixteen years old—went to bed drearily. He was out off and wrenched through October, November, and December. His mother died, but she could not escape herself. She could only depend on her deadness; he had been let to die so cruelly.

At last, on December 27, with his five shillings Christmas-box in his pocket, Paul wandered blindly home. His mother looked at him, and her heart stood still.



"What's the matter?" she asked.

"I'm badly, mother!" he replied. "Mr. Jordan gave me five shillings for a Christmas-box!"

He handed it to her with trembling hands. She put it on the table.

"You aren't glad?" he reproached her; but he trembled violently.

"Where hurts you?" she said, unbarring her eyes.

It was the old question.

"I feel badly, mother."

She undressed him and put him to bed. He had pneumonia, dangerously, the doctor said.

"Might he never have had it if I'd kept him at home, not let him go to Nottingham?" was one of the first things she asked.

"He might not have been so bad," said the doctor.

Mrs. Morel stood condemned on her own ground.

"I should have watched the living, not the dead," she told herself.

Paul was very ill. His mother lay at night with him; day could not afford a truce. He grew worse, and the pain approached. One night he passed into consciousness in the ghastly, deadly flash of convulsion, when all the cells in the body seem to refuse vitality so he looking down, and consciousness makes a last flare of struggle, like madness.

"I'll die, mother!" he cried, heaving his breath on the pillow.

She lifted him up, crying in a small voice:

"Oh, my son—my son!"

That brought him to. He reached her. His whole will rose up and invited her. He put his head on her breast, and took rest of her for love.

"For some things," said his aunt, "it was a good thing Paul was ill that Christmas. I believe it saved his mother."

Paul was in bed for seven weeks. He got up weak and fragile. His father had bought him a pair of scarlet and gold tulips. They went to flame in the window in the March sunshine as he sat on the sofa chatting to his mother. The two kissed together in perfect intimacy. Mrs. Morel's life now revolved itself in Paul.

William had been a prophet. Mrs. Morel had a little present and a letter from Lily at Christmas. Mrs. Morel's sister had a letter at the New Year.

"I was at a ball last night. Some delightful people were there, and I enjoyed myself thoroughly," said the letter. "I had every dance—did not sit out once."

Mrs. Morel never heard any more of her

Mazel and his wife were gentle with each other for some time after the death of their son. He would go into a kind of daze, staring white-wal and black across the room. Then he got up suddenly and hurried out to the Three Spots, returning in his normal state. But never in his life would he go for a walk up Shepawon, past the office where his son had worked, and he always avoided the cemetery.

## PART TWO

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*Lad-and-Girl Love*

Paul had been many times up to Willey Farm during the autumn. He was friends with the two youngest boys. Edgar the eldest, would not condescend at first. And Miriam also refused to be approached. She was afraid of being cut as weight, as by her own brothers. The girl was romantic in her soul. Every-where was a Walter Scott because being loved by men with helmets or with plumes in their caps. She herself was something of a princess turned into a heroine in her own imagination. And she was afraid lest this boy, who, nevertheless, looked something like a Walter Scott hero, who could paint and speak French, and knew what algebra meant, and who went by train to Nottingham every day, might consider her simply as the same girl, unable to perceive the princess beneath; so she held aloof.

Her great companion was her mother. They were both brown-eyed, and inclined to be mystical, each woman in her own religious realm alone, breathe it in their nostrils, and see the whole of life in a mist thereof. So to Miriam, Christ and God made one great figure, which she loved tremendously and passionately when a tremendous sunset burned out the western sky, and Editha, and Lucy, and Florence, Brian de Ros Guiberta, Rob Roy, and Guy Masserings, sailed the sunny leaves in the morning, or sat in her bed-room slat, alone, when it snowed. That was life to her. For the rest she despised as the heart, which work she would not have minded had not her clean red face been marked up increasingly by the wringing firmness of her brothers. She readily turned her little brother of four so let her stroke him and rub his face in her hair; she went to church reverently, with bowed head, and quivered in anguish from the vulgarity of the other choir-boys and from the common-sounding voice of the organ; she fought with her brothers, whom she considered brutal brutes, and she held not her father in too high esteem because he did not carry any mystical ideas cherished in his heart, but only seemed to have as many a dream as he could, and his mind when he was ready for them.

She hated her position as an orphan. She wanted to be con-

viewed. She wanted to learn, thinking that if she could read, as Paul told her could read, Coleridge, or the *Voyage* sailor de ma Chérie, the world would have a different face for her and a deeper respect. She could not be prisoners by wealth or standing. So she was used to have learning whomever to guide herself. For she was different from other folk, and must not be scooped up among the common fry. Learning was the only distinction to which she thought to agree.

Her beauty—that of a *div*, wild, quiveringly sensitive disquiet—served nothing to her. Even her soul, so strong for chagreeny, was not enough. She must have something to reinforce her pride, because she felt different from other people. Paul she eyed rather warily. On the whole, she scorned the male sex. But there was a new specimen, quick, light, graceful, who could be gentle and who could be mad, and who was clever, and who knew a lot, and who had a death in the family. The boy's poor record of learning excited her almost day-high in her eyes. Yet she tried hard to scorn him, because he would not see in her the prisoner but only the stranger-girl. And he scarcely observed her.

Then he was so ill, and the fith he would be weak. Then she would be stronger than he. Then she could love him. If she could be mistress of him in his weakness, take care of him, if he could depend on her, if she could, as it were, have him in her arms, how she would love him!

As soon as the first brightness and plum-blossom was out, Paul drove off in the milkman's heavy truck up to Willey Farm. Mr. Levens floated in a knobby fashion as the boy, then clerked in the home as they climbed the hill slowly, on the freshness of the morning. White clouds went on their way, crowding to the back of the hills that were rising in the spring-tide. The water of Nehemiah lay below, very blue against the scared meadows and the thorn-trees.

It was four and a half miles' drive. They both on the hedge, vivid as copper-green, were opening into squares; and thistles called, and blackbirds checked and scolded. It was a new, glamorous world.

Miriam, peeping through the kitchen window, saw the horse walk through the bog white gate into the farmyard that was backed by the ash-wood, well here. Then a youth in a heavy overcoat clambered down. He put up his hands for the whip and the rug that the good-looking, robbily farmer handed down to him.

Miriam appeared in the doorway. She was nearly sixteen, very beautiful, with her warm coloring, her gravity, her eyes distant suddenly like an scorn.

"I say," said Paul, turning shyly aside, "your daffodils are nearly out. Isn't it early? But don't they look odd?"

"Godd!" said Miriam, in her moment, covering eyes.

"The grass on their beds——" and he filtered away almost silently.

"Let me take the rug," said Miriam over-gently.

"I can carry it," he answered, rather awkward. But he yielded to no less.

Then Mrs. Lovem appeared.

"I'm sure you're tired and cold," she said. "Let me take your coat. It is heavy. You mustn't walk far in it."

She helped him off with his coat. He was quite unused to such attention. She was almost suffocated under its weight.

"Why, mother," laughed the farmer as he passed through the kitchen, sweeping the great milk-churns, "you've got almost more than you can manage there."

She beat up the old cushions for the youth.

The lodgers was very small and irregular. The farm had been originally a labourer's cottage. And the furniture was old and battered. But Paul loved it—loved the smoking that formed the hearthtop, and the funny little corner under the stairs, and the small window deep in the corner, through which, bending a little, he could see the plum-tree in the back-garden and the lovely round hills beyond.

"Won't you lie down?" said Mrs. Lovem.

"Oh no, I'm not used," he said. "Isn't it lovely coming out, don't you think? I saw a dog-bush in blossom and a lot of catkins. I'm glad it's sunny."

"Can I give you something to eat or to drink?"

"No, thank you."

"How's your mother?"

"I think she's tired now. I think she's had too much to do. Perhaps in a little while she'll go to Silegham with me. Then she'll be able to rest. I'll be glad if she can."

"Yes," replied Mrs. Lovem. "It's a wonder she isn't ill herself."

Miriam was moving about preparing dinner. Paul watched everything that happened. His face was pale and thin, but his eyes were quick and bright with life as ever. He watched the strange, almost chaotic way in which the girl moved about, carrying a great stew-pan to the oven, or looking in the larder-pan. The atmosphere was different from that of his own home, where everything seemed so ordinary. When Mrs. Lovem called loudly outside to the horse, that was reaching over to feed on the man-

lilies in the garden, the girl started, looked round with dark eyes, as if something had come knocking on an inner world. There was a sense of silence inside the house and out. Miriam seemed as if some dreamy life, a maiden in bondage, her spirit clinging to a land far away and magical. And her discoloured, old blue frock and her brown boots seemed only like the romantic rags of King Cophenue's beggar-maid.

She suddenly became aware of his keen blue eyes upon her, taking her all in. Instantly her lilies bloom and her flowered old frock hurt her. She counted his every movement. Even he knew that her stocking was not pulled up. She went into the scullery, blushing deeply. And afterwards her hands trembled slightly as her work. She nearly dropped all she knuckled. When her inside dream was shaken, her body quivered with repudiation. She counted that he saw so much.

Mrs. Laines sat for some time talking to the boy, although she was needed at her work. She was too polite to leave him. Presently she excused herself and ran. After a while she looked over the door-scapen.

"Oh dear, Miriam," she cried, "these potatoes have boiled dry!"

Miriam started as if she had been stung.

"How dry, mother?" she cried.

"I shouldn't care, Miriam," said the mother, "if I hadn't wanted them to you." She peered into the pan.

The girl stiffened as if from a blow. Her dark eyes dilated, she remained standing in the same spot.

"Well," she answered, gripped right in self-conscious shame, "I'm sure I looked at them five minutes ago."

"You," said the mother, "I know it's nearly done."

"They're not much burned," said Paul. "It doesn't matter, does it?"

Mrs. Laines looked at the youth with her brown, hurt eyes.

"It wouldn't matter but for the boys," she said to him. "Only Miriam knows what a trouble they make if the potatoes are 'burnt'."

"Then," thought Paul to himself, "you shouldn't let them make a trouble."

After a while Edgar came in. He wore luggage, and his boots were covered with earth. He was rather small, rather broad, for a farmer. He glanced at Paul, nodded to him distantly, and said: "Dinner ready?"

"Nearly, Edgar," replied the mother apologetically.

"I'm ready for mine," said the young man, taking up the

newspaper and reading. Presently the rest of the family trooped in. Dinner was served. The meal went rather bravely. The even-tempered and apologetic tone of the mother brought out all the brutality of manners in the sons. Edgar tasted the potatoes, marvelled his mouth quickly like a rabbit, looked indignantly at his mother, and said:

"These potatoes are burnt, mother."

"Yes, Edgar. I forgot them for a minute. Perhaps you'll have bread if you can't eat them."

Edgar looked in anger across at Miriam.

"What was Miriam doing that she couldn't attend to them?" he said.

Miriam looked up. Her mouth opened, her dark eyes blazed and stared, but she said nothing. She swallowed her anger and her shame, bowed her dark head.

"I'm sure she was trying hard," said the mother.

"She hasn't got sense even to boil the potatoes," said Edgar. "What is she kept at home for?"

"Only for making everything that's left in the pantry," said Miriam.

"They don't forget that potato-pie against our Miriam," laughed the father.

She was utterly humiliated. The mother sat in silence, suffering, like some saint out of place at the brutal board.

It puzzled Paul. He wondered vaguely why all this intense feeling was coming because of a few burnt potatoes. The mother mailed everything—even a bit of housework—to the plane of a religious war. The sons remained dumb; they felt themselves cut away underneath, and they answered with brutality and she with a mocking cynicism.

Paul was just growing out from childhood into manhood. The atmosphere, where everything took a religious value, came with a subtle fascination to him. There was something in the air. His own mother was logical. Here there was something different, something he loved, something that at times he hated.

Miriam quarrelled with her brothers fiercely. Later in the afternoon, when they had gone away again, her mother said:

"You disappointed me at dinner-time, Miriam."

The girl dropped her head.

"They are such brats!" she suddenly cried, looking up with blazing eyes.

"But hadn't you promised not to answer them?" said the mother. "And I believed in you. I can't stand it when you wrangle."



"But they're so hateful!" cried Myron, "and—and Joe."

"Yes, dear. But how often have I asked you not to answer Edgar back? Can't you let him say what he likes?"

"But why should he say what he likes?"

"Aren't you strong enough to bear it, Minnie, if even for my sake? Are you so weak that you must wrangle with them?"

Mrs. Lavers stuck unflinchingly to the decision of "the other chick." She could not build it at all into the boys. With the girls she extended leniency, and Minnie was the child of her heart. The boys loathed the other chick when it was presented to them. Mattie was often sufficiently bold to tease it. Then they spat on her and hated her. But she retained as her proud boundary, living within herself.

There was always this feeling of jangle and discord in the Lavers family. Although the boys seemed so bitterly this external appeal to their deeper feelings of resignation and proud hostility, yet it had no effect on them. They could not establish between themselves and an outsider just the ordinary human feeling and unimagined friendship, they were always restless for the coming closer. Ordinary talk seemed shallow to them, trivial and unsatisfiable. And so they were unconsciously, painfully aware in the simplest social intercourse, suffering, and yet helpless in their superiority. Thus beneath was the yearning for the real-ordinary to which they could not attain because they were too dumb, and every approach to close connection was blocked by their clumsy contempt of other people. They wanted genuine intimacy, but they could not get even normally near to anyone, because they scorned to take the first steps, they scorned the triviality which gives concrete human intercourse.

Paul fell under Mrs. Lavers' spell. Everything had a religious and unworldly meaning when he was with her. His soul, hard, highly developed, sought her as if for nourishment. Together they seemed to lift the vital face from an appearance.

Minnie was her mother's daughter. In the sunshine of the afternoon mother and daughter were down the field with him. They looked for nuts. There was a jenny wren's in the hedge by the orchard.

"I do want you to see this," said Mrs. Lavers.

He crouched down and carefully put his finger through the thorn into the round case of the nut.

"It's almost as if you were feeling inside the live body of the bird," he said, "it's so warm. They say a bird makes its nest round like a cup with peeing its breast on it. Then how did it make the ceiling round, I wonder?"

The ship seemed to wait into life for the two women. After that, Miriam came to see it every day. It seemed to sleep to her. Again, going down the backside with the girl, he noticed the reflective, polished splashes of gold, on the side of the deck.

"I like them," he said, "when their petals go flat back with the sunshine. They seem to be pressing themselves in the sun."

And then the splendours were after drove her with a little spell. Anthropomorphic as she was, she stimulated him into appreciating things thus, and then they lived for her. She seemed to need things hovering in her imagination or in her soul before she felt she had them. And she was cut off from ordinary life by her religious intensity which made the world for her like a nursery garden, or a paradise, where no real knowledge were not, or else so ugly, cruel thing.

So it was in this atmosphere of subtle missionary, this morning in their common feeling for something in Nature, that their love started.

Personally, he was a long time before he reached her. For two months he had to stay at home after his illness. For a while he went to Singapore with his mother, and was perfectly happy. But even from the outside he wrote long letters to John, Levens about the shore and the sea. And he brought back his beloved sketches of the flat Lincoln coast, anxious for them to see. Almost they would interest the Levens more than they interested his mother. It was not his art Mrs. Morel cared about; it was himself and his achievements. But Mrs. Levens and her children were almost his disciples. They looked him and made him glow to his work, whereas his mother's influence was to make him quietly determined, patient, dogged, unswerving.

His own was friends with the boys, whose violence was only superficial. They had all, when they could trust themselves, a strange gentleness and loveliness.

"Will you come with me in to the fellow?" asked Edgar rather hesitatingly.

Paul went joyfully, and spent the afternoon helping to hoe or to dig in Europe with his friend. He used to lie with the three brothers in the hay piled up in the barn and tell them about Nottingham and about Jordan's. In return, they taught him to milk, and let him do little jobs—chopping hay or pulping turnips—just as much as he liked. At mid-summer he worked all through hay-harvest with them, and then he lived there. The faculty was so cut off from the world actually. They seemed, somehow, like "the children of the same sun and sky." Though the beds were

strong and healthy, yet they had all that over-sensitiveness and hanging-back which made them so lovely, yet also such close, delicate friends once their intimacy was won. Paul loved them dearly, and they him.

Miriam came later. But he had come into her life before she made any mark on his. One dull afternoon, when the men were on the land and the rest at school, only Miriam and her mother at home, the girl said to him, after having hesitated for some time:

"Have you seen the swing?"

"Yes," he answered. "Where?"

"In the covered," she replied.

She always hesitated to offer or to show him anything. Men have such different standards of worth from women, and her dear things—the valuable things to her—her brothers had so often mocked or flouted.

"Come on, then," he replied, jumping up.

There were two corridors, one on either side of the barn. In the lower, darker shed there was standing for four cows. From the ceiling over the manger-wall to the youth and girl went forward for the great thick rope which hung from the beam in the darkness overhead, and was pushed back over a peg in the wall.

"It's something like a rope!" he exclaimed apprehensively, and he sat down in it, anxious to try it. Then immediately he rose.

"Come on, then, and have that go," he said to the girl.

"See," she answered, going into the barn, "we put some bags on the mat"; and she made the swing comfortable for him. That gave her pleasure. He held the rope.

"Come on, then," he said to her.

"No, I won't go first," she answered.

She stood aside in her silk, aloof fashion.

"Why?"

"You go," she pleaded.

Almost for the first time in her life she had the pleasure of giving up to a man, of yielding him. Paul looked at her.

"All right," he said, moving down. "Mind out!"

He set off with a spring, and in a moment was flying through the air—almost out of the door of the shed, the upper half of which was open, showing outside the drizzling rain, the filthy yard, the outside standing disconsolate against the black curtain, and at the back of all the grey-green wall of the wood. She stood below in her crimson turtl-neck and watched. He looked at her, and she saw his blue eyes sparkling.

"It's a sort of a swing," he said.

"Yes."

He was swinging through the air, every bit of him swinging, like a hand that sweeps for joy of movement. And he looked down at her. Her crimson cap hung over her dark curls, her beautiful warm face, so still to a hand of brooding, was tilted towards him. It was dark and rather cold in the street. Suddenly a window came down from the high roof and stared out of the door.

"I didn't know a bird was watching," he called.

He swung negligently. She could feel him falling and tilting through the air, as if he were lying on some force.

"Now I'll die," he said, in a detached, dreamy voice, as though he were the dying motion of the swing. She watched him, fascinated. Suddenly he put on the brake and jumped out.

"I've had a long work," he said. "But it's a treat of a swing—it's a treat of a swing!"

Marian was amazed that he took a swing so seriously and felt so warmly over it.

"No, you go on," she said.

"Why, don't you want one?" he asked, astonished.

"Well, not much. I'll have just a trial."

She sat down, while he kept the bug in place for her.

"It's so ripping!" he said, setting her in motion. "Keep your back up, or they'll hang the stranger-wall."

She felt the accuracy with which he caught her, exactly at the right moment, and the nicely proportioned strength of his thrust, and she was afraid. Down to her breast was the hot wave of fear she was in his hands. Again, then, and inevitable came the thrust at the right moment. She gripped the rope, almost screaming.

"Ha!" she laughed in fear. "No higher!"

"But you've not a lot high," he remonstrated.

"But no higher."

He heard the fear in her voice, and desisted. Her heart melted in hot pain when she moment came for him to thrust her forward again. But he left her alone. She began to breathe.

"Won't you really go any farther?" he asked. "Should I keep you there?"

"No; let me go by myself," she answered.

He moved aside and watched her.

"Why, you're scarcely shoving," he said.

She laughed slightly with shame, and in a moment got down.

"They say if you can swing you won't be awfully," he said, as he moved again. "I don't believe I should ever know-jack."

Away he went. There was something fascinating to her in him. For the moment he was nothing but a piece of swinging stuff, not a particle of her that did not swing. She could never love

himself as, nor could her brothers. It roused a warmth in her. It was almost as if he were a flame that had lit a warmth in her when he came in the middle air.

And gradually the intimacy with the family concentrated for first on three persons—the mother, Edgar, and Marian. To the mother he went for that sympathy and that appeal which seemed to draw him out. Edgar was his very close friend. And to Marian he went or he confided, because she seemed so kind.

But the girl gradually sought him out. If he brought up his sketch-book, it was she who pondered longest over the last picture. Then she would look up at him. Suddenly, her dark eye slight like water that shines with a stream of gold in the dark, she would ask:

"Why do I like this so?"

Always something in his breast shook from those clear, intimate, detailed looks of hers.

"Why do you?" he asked.

"I don't know. It seems so true."

"It's beautiful—it's because there is scarcely any shadow in it; it's more shimmering, as if I'd painted the shimmering protoplasm in the leaves and everywhere, and not the stiffness of the shape. That seems dead to me. Only this shimmeriness is the real thing. The shape is a dead crust. The shimmer is made really."

And she, with her little finger in her mouth, would ponder these sayings. They gave her a feeling of life again, and verified things which had meant nothing to her. She managed to find some meaning in the struggling, abstract speeches. And they were the medium through which she came directly at her beloved sister.

Another day she sat at sunset while he was painting some pine-trees which caught the red glare from the west. He had been quiet.

"There you are!" he said suddenly. "I wanted that. Now, look at them and tell me, are they pine-trees or are they red oak, standing-up pieces of fire in that darkness? There's God's burning bush for you, that burned not away."

Marian looked, and was frightened. But the pine-trees were wonderful to her, and curious. He packed his box and went. Suddenly he looked at her.

"Why are you always sad?" he asked her.

"Sad?" she exclaimed, looking up at him with startled, wonderful brown eyes.

"Yes," he replied. "You are always, always sad."

"I am not—oh, not a bit!" she cried.

"But even your joy is like a flame coming off of violence," he persisted. "You're never jolly, or even just all right."

"No," she pondered. "I wonder—why?"

"Because you're not; because you're different inside, like a pine-tree, and then you flare up; but you're not just like an ordinary tree, with lightry leaves and jolly——"

He got tangled up in his own speech; but she branched on it, and he had a strange, roused sensation, as if his feelings were new. She got so near to him. It was a strange sensation.

Then sometimes he turned her. Her youngest brother was only five. He was a frail lad, with immense brown eyes in his quaint fragile face—one of Reynolds's "Choir of Angels," with a touch of all. Often Miriam looked to the child and drew him to her.

"Eh, my Hubert!" she sang, in a voice heavy and overcharged with love. "Eh, my Hubert!"

And, holding him in her arms, she swayed, slightly from side to side with love, her face half lifted, her eyes half closed, her voice drenched with love.

"Don't!" said the child, uneasy—"don't Miriam!"

"Yes, you love me, don't you?" she murmured deep in her throat, almost as if she were in a trance, and swaying also as if she were moved in an ecstasy of love.

"Don't!" repeated the child, a frown on his dear brow.

"You love me, don't you?" she murmured.

"What do you make such a fuss for?" cried Paul, all in suffering because of her extreme emotion. "Why can't you be ordinary with him?"

She let the child go, and rose, and said nothing. Her intensity, which would leave no emotion on a normal plane, turned the youth into a frenzy. And the fearful, naked content of her on small occasions shocked him. He was used to his mother's reserve. And on such occasions he was thankful in his heart and sad that he had his mother, so sane and wholesome.

All the life of Miriam's body was in her eyes, which were usually dark as a dark church, but could flame with light like a conflagration. Her face scarcely ever altered from its look of brooding. She might have been one of the women who went with Mary when Jesus was dead. Her body was not female and living. She walked with a swing, rather heavily, her head bowed forward, pondering. She was not clumsy, and yet some of her movements seemed quite the movements. Often, when wiping the dishes, she would stand in bewilderment and confusion because she had pulled in two halves a cup or a tumbler. It was as if, in her fear and self-criticism, she

put too much strength into the effort. There was no increase or shakedown about her. Everything was gripped stiff with intensity, and her effort, unrelenting, closed in on itself.

She merely varied from her staggering, forward, reverse, walk. Occasionally she ran with Paul down the fields. Then her eyes blazed raised to a kind of ecstasy that frightened him. But she was physically ahead. If she were getting over a stile, she gripped his hands as a life-line and argued, and began to lose her presence of mind. And he could not persuade her to jump from even a small height. Her eyes dilated, became exposed and palpitating.

"Not," she cried, half laughing in terror—"not!"

"You shall!" he cried stern, and, jerking her forward, he brought her falling from the fence. But her wild "Ah!" of pain, as if she were being compressed, cut him. She landed on her feet safely, and afterwards had courage to this respect.

She was very much disatisfied with her lot.

"Don't you like being at home?" Paul asked her, surprised.

"What would?" she answered, low and intense. "What is it? I'm all day cleaning what the boys make just as bad in five minutes. I don't want to be at home."

"What do you want, then?"

"I want to do something. I want a chance like anybody else. Why should I, because I'm a girl, be kept at home and not allowed to be anything? What chance has it?"

"Chance of what?"

"Of knowing anything—of hunting, of doing anything. It's not fair, because I'm a woman."

She seemed very bitter. Paul wondered. In his own home Akela was almost glad to be a girl. She had not so much responsibility, things were lighter for her. She never wanted to be other than a girl. But Miriam almost fervently wished she were a man. And yet she hated men at the same time.

"But it's as well to be a woman as a man," he said, frowning.

"But?" he asked. "Men have everything."

"I should think women ought to be as glad to be women as men are to be men," he answered.

"Not," she shook her head—"not! Everything the men have."

"But what do you want?" he asked.

"I want to learn. Why should it be that I know nothing?"

"What? such as mathematics and French?"

"Why shouldn't I know mathematics? Yes!" she cried, her eye expanding in a kind of defiance.

"Well, you can learn as much as I know," he said. "I'll teach you, if you like."

Her eyes dilated. She mistrusted him as a teacher.

"Would you?" he asked.

Her head had dropped, and she was rubbing her finger broodingly.

"Yes," she said hesitatingly.

He used to tell his mother all these things.

"I'm going to teach Michael algebra," he said.

"Will?" replied Mrs. Morel, "I hope she'll get the go on it."

When he went up to the farm on the Monday evening, it was drawing twilight. Minnie was just sweeping up the kitchen, and was kneeling at the hearth when he entered. Everyone was out but her. She looked round at him, flushed, her dark eyes shining, her fine hair falling about her face.

"Hello?" she said, soft and musical. "I know it was you."

"How?"

"I know your step. Nobody tends so quick and firm."

He sat down, sighing.

"Ready to do some algebra?" he asked, drawing a little book from his pocket.

"For—"

He could feel her backing away.

"You said you wanted," he insisted.

"Tonight, though?" she faltered.

"But I came on purpose. And if you want to learn it, you must begin."

She took up her sash in the chapeau and looked at him, half uneasily, laughing.

"Yes, but to-night! You see, I haven't thought of it."

"Well, my goodness! Take the sash and come."

He went and sat on the stone bench in the back-yard, where the big milk-cans were standing, tipped up, to dry. The men were in the cowshed. He could hear the little sing-song of the milk spouting into the pails. Presently she came, bringing some big greenish apples.

"You know you like these," she said.

He took a bite.

"Sit down," he said, with his mouth full.

She was the twilighted, and peered over his shoulder. It irritated him. He gave her the book quickly.

"Here," he said. "It's only letters for figures. You put down 'a' instead of '1' or '2'."

They worked, he talking, she with her head down on the book. He was quick and happy. She never answered. Occasionally, when he descended of her, "Do you read?" she looked up at him,



her eyes wide with the half-fright that comes of fear. "Don't you?" he cried.

He had been too fast. But she said nothing. He questioned her eyes, then got her hat. It made his blood pound to see her there, as it were, so his anxiety, her mouth open, her eyes dilated with laughter that was throat, apologetic, ashamed. Then Edgar came along with two baskets of milk.

"Hello!" he said. "What are you doing?"

"Algebra," replied Paul.

"Algebra!" repeated Edgar merrily. Then he passed on with a laugh. Paul took a bite at his forgotten apple, looked at the miserable catkins in the garden, pecked into them by the fowls, and he wanted to pull them up. Then he glanced at Miriam. She was peering over the back, seemed absorbed in it, yet trembling lest she could not get at it. It made him cross. She was ruddy and handsome. Yet her soul seemed to be intensely suppliant. The algebra-book she closed, clanking, knowing he was angry; and at the same instant he grew gentle, seeing her hurt because she did not understand.

But things came slowly to her. And when she held herself in a grip, seemed so weakly humble before the lesson, it made his blood run. He stormed at her, got ashamed, comforted the lesson, and gave fierce signs, showing her, like himself in silence. Occasionally, very rarely, she belated herself. Her liquid dark eyes blazed at him.

"You don't give me time to learn it," she said.

"All right," he answered, throwing the book on the table and lighting a cigarette. Then, after awhile, he went back to her repentant. So the lessons went. He was shrewd either in a rage or very gentle.

"What do you trouble your soul before is it?" he cried. "You don't learn algebra with your blessed soul. Can't you look at it with your dear simple wit?"

Often, when he went again into the kitchen, Mrs. Leland would look at him reproachfully, saying:

"Paul, don't be so hard on Miriam. She may not be quick, but I'm sure she tries."

"I can't help it," he said rather pitifully. "I go off like it."

"You don't mind me, Miriam, do you?" he asked of the girl later.

"No," she reassured him on her beautiful deep tones—"no, I don't mind."

"Don't mind me, it's my fault."

But, in spite of himself, his blood began to boil with her. It was  
 185

strange that no one else made him an such story. He flared against her. Once he threw the pencil in her face. There was a silence like tanned her face slightly aside.

"I didn't——" he began, but got no farther, feeling weak in all his bones. She never reproached him or was angry with him. He was often cruelly rebuffed. But still again his anger burst like a bubble uncharged, and still, when he saw her eager, silent, as it were, blind face, he felt he wanted to throw the pencil at it, and still, when he saw her head trembling and her quavering parted with suffering, his heart was welded with pain for her. And because of the intensity to which she moved him, he sought her.

Then he often avoided her and went with Edgar. Milton and her father were naturally antagonistic. Edgar was a rationalist, who was cunning, and had a sort of academic interest in life. It was a great interest to Milton to see himself deserted by Paul for Edgar, who turned so much toward. But the youth was very happy with her older brother. The two men spent afternoons together on the land or in the loft doing carpentry, when it rained. And they talked together, or Paul taught Edgar the steps he himself had learned from Anne at the piano. And often all the way. Mr. Lelven as well, had bitter debates on the non-reaching of the land and similar problems. Paul had already heard his mother's views, and as these were as yet his own, he argued for her. Milton attended and took part, but was all the time willing until it should be over and a personal communication might begin.

"After all," she said within herself, "if the land were nationalized, Edgar and Paul and I would be just the same." So she waited for the youth to come back to her.

He was studying for his painting. He loved to sit at home, alone with his mother, at night, waiting and working. She sewed or read. Then, looking up from his task, he would run his eyes for a moment on her face, that was bright with living warmth, and he returned gladly to his work.

"I am in my best things when you sit there in your rocking-chair, mother," he said.

"I'm sure!" she exclaimed, smiling with much excitement. But she felt it was so, and her heart quivered with brightness. For many hours she sat still, slightly conscious of him laboring away, while she worked or read her book. And he, with all his soul's intensity directing his pencil, could feel her warmth made his strength. They were both very happy so, and both unconscious of it. These times, that meant so much, and which were real living, they almost ignored.

He was conscious only when stimulated. A sketch finished, he

always wanted to take it to Miriam. Then he was stimulated into knowledge of the work he had produced unconsciously. In contact with Miriam he gained insight, his vision went deeper. From his mother he drew the life-worketh, the strength to produce; Miriam added that certain instantaneous like a white light.

When he returned to the factory the condition of work was better. He had Wednesday afternoon off to go to the Art School.—Miss Jordan's presence—returning in the evening. Then the factory closed at six instead of eight on Thursday and Friday evenings.

One evening in the summer Miriam and he went over the firth by Harold's Farm on their way from the library home. So it was only three miles to Willey Farm. There was a yellow glow over the morning-glaze, and the sunset-bushes burned crimson. Gradually, as they walked along the high land, the gold in the west sank down to red, the red to crimson, and the the dull blue crept up against the glow.

They came out upon the highroad to Affricton, which ran where between the darkening fields. There Ford hesitated. It was two miles home for him, one mile forward for Miriam. They both looked up the road that ran in shadow right under the glow of the north-west sky. On the crest of the hill, Selby, with its stark houses and the uppeaked handworks of the pit, stood in black silhouette small against the sky.

He looked at his watch.

"Nine o'clock!" he said.

The girl stood, both so pure, hugging their bodies.

"The woods so lovely now," she said. "I wanted you to walk."

He followed her slowly across the road to the white gate.

"They grumble so if I'm late," he said.

"But you're not doing anything wrong," she answered impatiently.

He followed her across the shibbled pasture in the dark. There was a confusion in the wood, a mass of leaves, of hoppers, and a twilight. The two walked in silence. Night came wonderfully there, among the throng of dark wood-mosses. He looked round, expectant.

She wanted to show him a certain white-rust bush she had discovered. She knew it was wonderful. And yet, all he had seen it, she felt it had not come from her soul. Only he could make it his own, immortal. She was dissatisfied.

There was already on the path. In the old ashwood a mist was rising, and he hesitated, wondering whether one white-rust were a vessel of life or only champagne-bubbles pulled to a cloud.

By the time they came to the pine-tree Miriam was getting very eager and very tense. Her bath might be gone. She might not be able to find it, and she wanted it so much. Almost passionately she wanted to be with him when he stood before the flowers. They were going to have a communion together—something that thrilled her, something holy. He was walking beside her in silence. They were very close to each other. She trembled, and he looked, vaguely nervous.

Coming to the edge of the wood, they saw the sky as first, like mother-of-pearl, and the earth growing dark. Somewhere on the nearest branches of the pine-tree the hawfinch was screaming again.

"Where?" he asked.

"Down the middle path," she murmured, quivering.

When they turned the corner of the path she stood still. In the wide walk between the paths, growing rather fringed now, she could distinguish nothing for some moments; the growing light robbed things of their colour. Then she saw her bath.

"Ah!" she cried, hurrying forward.

It was very still. The tree was tall and scraggling. It had thrown its bough over a hawthorn-bush, and its long branches trailed thick, soft down to the grass, splashing the darkness everywhere with great soft stars, pure white. Its leaves of ivory and its large splashed veins the moss gleamed on the darkness of foliage and moss and grass. Paul and Miriam stood close together, silent, and watched. From white points the steady rain shone out to them, seeming to breathe something in their souls. The dark came like smoke around, and still did not put out the moss.

Paul looked into Miriam's eyes. She was pale and expectant with wonder, her lips were parted, and her dark eyes lay open to him. His look seemed to travel down into her. Her soul quivered. It was the communion she wanted. He turned aside, as if pained. He moved to the bath.

"They seem as if they walk like butterflies, and shade themselves," he said.

She looked at her room. They were white, some incurved and holy, others expanded in an ecstasy. The moss was dark as a shadow. She lifted her hand vaguely to the flowers; she went forward and touched them as worship.

"Let us go," he said.

There was a cool scent of ivory moss—a white, virgin scent. Something made him feel anxious and impatient. The two walked in silence.

"Till Sunday," he said quietly, and left her; and she walked

home slowly, feeling himself satisfied with the holiness of the night life scurried down the path. And as soon as he was out of the wood, in that first quiet roadside, where he could breathe, he started to run as fast as he could. It was like a delicious skating on his feet.

Always when he went with Marian, and it grew rather late, he knew his mother was fretting and getting angry about him—why, he could not understand. As he went into the house, flinging down his cap, his mother looked up at the clock. She had been sitting thinking, because a chill to her eyes prevented her reading. She could feel Paul being drawn away by this girl. And she did not care for Miriam. "She is one of those who will want to such a man's soul and all he has none of his own left," she said to herself, "and he is just such a gaby as to let himself be absorbed. She will never let him, because a man, she never will." So, while he was away with Miriam, Mrs. Morel grew more and more worried up.

She glanced at the clock and said, mildly and rather dead,

"You have been far enough to-night."

His soul, warm and exposed from contact with the girl, shrank.

"You must have been eight hours with her," his mother continued.

He would not answer. Mrs. Morel, looking at him quickly, saw his hair was damp on his forehead with heat, saw him drawing in his heavy fashion, resentfully.

"She must be wonderfully fascinating, that you can't go away from her, but must go walking eight miles at the time of night."

He was hurt between the past glamour with Miriam and the knowledge that his mother fretted. He had meant not to say anything, to refuse to answer. But he could not harden his heart or ignore his mother.

"I do like to talk to her," he answered grudgingly.

"Is there nobody else to talk to?"

"You wouldn't say anything if I went with Edgar."

"You know I should. You know, whoever you went with, I should say it was too far for you to go tramping, late at night, when you've been to Nottingham. Besides"—her voice suddenly lashed into anger and contempt—"it is disgusting—this of lads and girls courting."

"It is not disgusting," he said.

"I don't know what else you call it."

"It's not. Do you think we go on and do? We only talk."

"Till goodness knows what time and distance," was the sarcastic rejoinder.

Paul wrapped up the faces of his boots angrily.

"What are you so mad about?" he asked. "Because you don't like her?"

"I don't say I don't like her. But I don't hold with children keeping company, and never did."

"But you don't mind our Anne going out with Jim Inger?"

"They've more sense than you two."

"Why?"

"Our Anne's not one of the deep sort."

He failed to see the meaning of this remark. But his mother looked vexed. She was never so strong after Mr. March's death, and her eyes hurt him.

"Well," he said, "it's so pretty in the country. Mr. March asked about you. He said he'd missed you. Are you a bit better?"

"I ought to have been in bed a long time ago," she replied.

"Well, mother, you know you wouldn't have gone before quarter past ten."

"Oh yes, I should!"

"Oh, little woman, you'd say anything now you're disagreeable with me, wouldn't you?"

He kissed her forehead that he knew so well: the deep marks between the brows, the ring of the fine hair, growing now, and the proud setting of the temples. His hand lingered on her shoulder after his kiss. Then he went slowly to bed. He had forgotten Miriam; he only saw how his mother's hair was lifted back from her warm, broad brow. And somehow, she was hurt.

Then the next time he saw Miriam he said to her,

"Don't let me be late to-night—not later than ten o'clock. My mother goes to sleep."

Miriam dropped her head, brooding.

"Why does she get upset?" she asked.

"Because she says I oughtn't to be out late when I have to get up early."

"Very well!" said Miriam, rather quickly, with just a touch of a sneer.

He sensed that. And he was usually late again.

That there was any love growing between him and Miriam neither of them would have acknowledged. He thought he was too sure for such responsibility, and she thought herself too lofty. They both were late in coming to maturity, and physical ripeness was much behind even the physical. Miriam was exceedingly sensitive, as her mother had always been. The slightest grievance made her mood almost as anguished. Her feelings were brutal, but never came to speech. The men did all the discussing of farm

garden outside. But, perhaps, because of the confined business of both one of begotting which goes on upon every farm, Miriam was the more hypocrite to the matter, and her blood was checked almost in disgust of the salacious suggestions of such intercourse. Paul took his patch from her, and their intimacy went on in an entirely blase and chaste fashion. It could never be ascertained that the mare was in foal.

When he was sixteen, he was making only twenty shillings a week, but he was happy. His painting went well, and life went well enough. On the Good Friday he organised a walk to the Hambleth Stone. There were three lads of his own age, then Anne and Arthur, Miriam and Geoffrey. Arthur, apprenticed as an electrician in Nottingham, was home for the holiday. Moral, as usual, was up early, whistling and stowing in the yard. At seven o'clock the family heard him buy threepennyworth of brown bread; he talked with gusto to the little girl who brought them, calling her "my darling." He turned away several boys who came with more bread, telling them they had been "kissed" by a little lass. Then Mrs. Moral got up, and the family struggled down. It was an immense luxury to everybody, this being in bed just beyond the ordinary time on a weekday. And Paul and Arthur read before breakfast, and had the great unwashed, sitting in their short-sleeves. This was another holiday luxury. The room was warm. Everything felt free of care and anxiety. There was a warm affluence in the house.

While the boys were stalling, Mrs. Moral went into the garden. They were now in another house, an old one, near the Scarpill Street house, which had been left soon after William had died. Directly sight as desired cry from the garden:

"Paul, Paul! come and look!"

It was his mother's voice. He threw down his book and went out. There was a long garden that ran to a field. It was a gray, cold day, with a sharp wind blowing out of Dealpham. Two fields away Bortwood began, with a jumble of roofs and red house-roofs, out of which rose the church tower and the spire of the Congregational Chapel. And beyond were woods and hills, right away to the pale gray heights of the Pennine Chain.

Paul looked down the garden for his mother. Her head appeared among the young currant-bushes.

"Come here!" she cried.

"What for?" he answered.

"Come and see."

She had been looking at the back on the currant-trees. Paul went up.

"Ty think," she said, "that here I might never have seen them!"

Her son went to her side. Under the flower, in a little bed, was a nest of pale gray leaves, such as come from very miniature hells, and three crystals in bloom. Mrs. Mount pointed to the deep blue flowers.

"Now, just see them!" she exclaimed. "I was looking at the current-bushes, when, thank I to myself, 'There's something very blue; as a lot of sugar-bag!' and there 'behold you! Sugar-bag! Three-glass of the water, and such beautiful! But where on earth did they come from?'"

"I don't know," said Paul.

"Well, that's a marvel, now! I thought I knew every weed and blade in the garden. But aren't they done well! You see, that gooseberry-bush just shrouds them. Not capped, not touched!"

He crouched down, and turned up the beds of the little blue flowers.

"They're a glorious culture!" he said.

"Aren't they?" she cried. "I guess they come from Switzerland, where they say they have such lovely things. Fancy them against the snow! But where have they come from? They can't have flown here, can they?"

Then he remembered having not here a lot of little trink of hells in nature.

"And you never told me," she said.

"No; I thought I'd leave it till they might leave."

"And now, you see, I might have missed them. And I've never had a glory of the snow in my garden in my life!"

She was full of excitement and elation. The garden was as much a joy to her. Paul was thankful for her sake as long to be in a house with a long garden that went down to a field. Every morning after breakfast she went out and was happy potting about in it. And it was true, she knew every weed and blade.

Everybody turned up for the walk. Paul was packed, and they set off, a merry, delighted party. They hung over the wall of the mill-race, dropped paper in the water on one side the canal and watched it float out on the other. They stood on the foot-bridge over Southgate Station and looked at the marsh gleaming softly.

"You should see the Flying Scotsman come through at half past six!" said Leonard, whose father was a signalman. "Look, but she doesn't half beam!" and the little party looked up the line one way, to London, and the other way, to Scotland, and they felt the touch of these two magical places.



In Elston the colliers were waiting in gangs for the public-house to open. It was a town of idleness and loafing. At Stanton Gate the iron foundry blazed. Over everything there were great discussions. At Trusell they crossed again from Derbyshire into Nottinghamshire. They came to the Handcock Stone at dinner-time. The field was covered with hills from Nottingham and Ilkerton.

They had expected a venerable and dignified environment. They found a little, graded, treated dump of rock, something like a decayed workroom, standing out pathetically on the side of a field. Leonard and Dick immediately proceeded to curse their manse, "L. W." and "B. P." in the old red sandstone; but Paul desisted, because he had read in the newspaper satirical remarks about lunatic-carvers, who could find no other road to immortality. Then all the lads climbed to the top of the rock to look round.

Everywhere in the field below, factory gales and lads were using lunch as spurring about. Beyond was the garden of an old manor. It had yew-hedges and thick clumps and lawns of yellow crocuses round the lawn.

"See," said Paul to Miriam, "what a quiet garden!"

She saw the dark yews and the golden crocuses, then she looked at him guardedly. He had not seemed to belong to her among all these others; he was different then—not her Paul, who understood the slightest quiver of her innermost soul, but something else, speaking another language than hers. How it hurt her, and dazed her very perceptions. Only when he came right back to her, leaving his other, his inner self, as she thought, would she feel alive again. And now he asked her to look at this garden, waving the contact with her again. Impatient of the rot in the field, she turned to the green lawn, surrounded by clusters of shut-up crocuses. A feeling of softness, almost of mystery, came over her. It felt almost as if she were alone with him in the garden.

Then he left her again and joined the others. Soon they moved home. Miriam looked behind, alone. She did not fit in with the others; she could very rarely get into human relations with anyone so far from, her compassion, her lover, was Miriam. She saw the sun declining wistly. In the dusky, cold backgarden were some red leaves. She hoped to gather them, tenderly, passionately. The love in her finger-tips warmed the leaves; the passion in her heart came to a glow upon the leaves.

Suddenly she realised she was alone in a strange road, and she hurried forward. Turning a corner in the lane, she came upon Paul, who stood bent over something, his mind fixed on it, working

away steadily, patiently, a little hopefully. She hesitated in her approach, to watch.

He remained concentrated in the middle of the road. Beyond one rift of red gold in that colourless grey evening seemed to make him stand out in dark relief. She saw him, slender and firm, as if the setting sun had given him to her. A deep pain took hold of her, and she knew she must love him. And she had discovered him, discovered in him a new possibility, discovered his loneliness. Quivering as at some "annunciation," she went slowly forward.

At last he looked up.

"Why," he exclaimed gratefully, "have you waited for me?"

She saw a deep shadow in his eyes.

"What is it?" she asked.

"The young broken here"; and he showed her where his umbrella was injured.

Instantly, with some shame, she knew he had not done the damage himself, but that Geoffrey was responsible.

"It is only an old umbrella, isn't it?" she asked.

She wondered why he, who did not usually trouble over trifles, made such a mystery of this mishap.

"But it was William's, and my mother can't help but know," he said quietly, still persistently working at the umbrella.

The words went through Miriam like a blade. That, then, was the confirmation of her vision of him. She looked at him. But there was about him a certain reserve, and she dared not comfort him, not even speak softly to him.

"Come on," he said. "I can't do it"; and they went in silence along the road.

That same evening they were walking along under the trees by Mother Green. He was talking to her steadily, seemed to be struggling to convince himself.

"You know," he said, with an effort, "if one person loves, the other does."

"Ah!" she answered. "Like mother said to me when I was little, 'Love begins love'."

"Yes, something like that, I think it may be."

"I hope so, because, if it were not, love might be a very terrible thing," she said.

"Yes, but it is—at least with most people," he answered.

And Miriam, thinking he had assured himself, felt strong in herself. She always regarded that sudden coming upon him in the lane as a revelation. And this conversation remained graven in her mind as one of the lessons of the lane.

Now she stood with him and for him. When, about this time, he interpreted the heavily feeling at Willey Parnaby's come-overcoming look, she shook to him, and believed he was right. And at this time she dreamed dreams of him, vivid, unforgettable. These dreams came again later on, developed to a most subtle psychological stage.

On the Easter Monday the same party took an excursion to Wingfield Manor. It was great excitement to Miriam to catch a train at Sackley Lodge, amid all the bustle of the South Midland crowd. They left the train at Alderton. Paul was interested in the coast and in the coffin with their dogs. Here was a new ring of masons. Miriam did not leave till they came to the church. They went all rather wild of meeting, with their bags of food, the fear of being turned out. Leonard, a cousin, then before, went first. Paul, who would have died rather than be sent back, went last. The place was decorated for Easter. In the last hundreds of white roses seemed to be growing. The air was blue and coloured from the windows, and filled with a subtle scent of lilacs and myrror. In that atmosphere Miriam's soul came into a glow. Paul was afraid of the things he wasn't do; and he was sensitive to the feel of the place. Miriam turned to him. He answered. They were inspired. He would not go beyond the Communion-table. She loved him for that. Her soul expanded into prayer beside him. He felt the strange fascination of shadowy religious places. All his latent mysticism quivered into life. She was drawn to him. He was a prayer along with her.

Miriam very rarely talked to the other lady. They at once became involved in conversation with her. So usually she was silent.

It was past midday when they climbed the steep path to the manor. All things about softly in the sun, which was wonderfully warm and relaxing. Celebrations and collars were out. Everybody was tip-top full with happiness. The glaze of the lay, the soft, atmospheric gay of the castle walls, the gentleness of everything near the main, was perfect.

The manor is of hard, pale grey stone, and the outer walls are black and calm. The young folk were in raptures. They went in trepidation, almost afraid that the delight of supposing the man might be denied them. In the last courtyard, within the high broken walls, were fern-carts, with their shafts lying like on the ground, the tops of the wheels brilliant with gold-red mud. It was very odd.

All eagerly paid their expenses, and went slowly through the last clean arch of the inner courtyard. They were shy. Here an

the pavement, where the hall had been, an old stone-ace was leaning. All kinds of strange openings and hidden rooms were in the shadow around them.

After lunch they set off once more to explore the ruins. This time the girls went with the boys, who could act as guides and explorers. There was one tall tower in a corner, rather tottering, where they say Mary Queen of Scots was imprisoned.

"Think of the Queen going up here!" said Miriam in a low voice, as she dashed the hollow stairs.

"If she could get up," said Paul, "for she had rheumatism like anything. I reckon they treated her nicely."

"You don't think she deserved it?" asked Miriam.

"No, I don't. She was only lovely."

They continued to ascend the winding staircases. A high wind, blowing through the loopholes, went making up the shaft, and lifted the girl's skirt like a balloon, so that she was ashamed, until he took the hem of her dress and held it down for her. He did it perfectly simply, as he would have picked up her glove. She remembered this always.

Round the highest top of the tower the ivy budged out, old and hardhearted. Also, there were a few chill gillivets, or pale gold hags. Miriam wanted to leap over for some ivy, but she would not let her. Instead, she had to wear fettered hair, and take from him each gillie as he gathered it and held it to her, each one separately, in the quaint manner of chivalry. The tower seemed to rock in the wind. They looked over miles and miles of wooded country, and country with ghosts of houses.

The crypt underneath the manor was beautiful, and in perfect preservation. Paul made a drawing: Miriam stayed with him. She was thinking of Mary Queen of Scots looking with her strained, hopeless eyes, that could not understand misery, over the hills whence no help came, or sitting in this crypt, being told of a God as cold as the place she sat in.

They set off again gaily, looking round on their beloved manor that used to cheer and beg so on hill.

"Supposing you could have that ham," said Paul to Miriam.

"Yes!"

"Wouldn't it be lovely to come and see you?"

They were now in the best country of stone walls, which he loved, and which, though only ten miles from home, seemed as foreign to Miriam. The party was struggling. As they were crossing a large meadow that sloped away from the sea, along a path unbedded with immensurable tiny glittering prints, Paul, walking alongside, heard his fingers in the strings of the bag

Miriam was carrying, and instantly she felt Anne behind, marshaled and justified. But the windpipe was bathed in a glory of sunshine, and the path was jewelled, and it was added that he gave her any sign. She held her fingers very still among the strings of the bag, her fingers twitching; and the place was golden as a vision.

At last they came into the struggling grey village of Crick, that lies high. Beyond the village was the famous Crick Stand that Paul could see from the garden at home. The party pushed on. Great expanses of country spread around and below. The lads were eager to get to the top of the hill. It was capped by a round knoll, half of which was by now cut away, and on the top of which stood an ancient monument, sturdy and squat, for signalling in old days far down into the broad lands of Nottinghamshire and Leicestershire.

It was blowing so hard, high up there in the exposed place, that the only way to be safe was to stand nailed by the wind to the wall of the tower. At their feet fell the precipice where the limestones were quarried away. Below was a jumble of hills and tiny villages—Mastock, Ambegate, Horby Middleton. The lads were eager to spy out the church of Beacom, far away among the rather crowded country on the left. They were disappointed that it seemed to stand on a plain. They saw the hills of Derbyshire fall into the monotony of the Midlands that swept away South.

Miriam was somewhat scared by the wind, but the lads enjoyed it. They went on, miles and miles, to Wharfedale. All the time was eating, everybody was hungry, and there was very little money to get home with. But they managed to procure a loaf and a current-loaf, which they baked into peace with shut-heaven, and are sitting on the wall near the bridge, watching the heights Derwent rushing by, and the boats from Mastock pulling up at the inn.

Paul was near pale with weakness. He had been responsible for the party all day, and now he was done. Miriam understood, and kept close to him, and he left himself in her hands.

They had no time to wait at Ambegate Station. Trains came, crowded with millionaires returning to Manchester, Birmingham, and London.

"We might be going there—folk easily might think we're going that far," said Paul.

They got back rather late. Miriam, walking home with Geoffrey, watched the moon rise big and red and steep. She felt something was fulfilled in her.

She had an older sister, Agatha, who was a school-teacher. Between the two girls was a feud. Miriam considered Agatha worldly. And she wanted herself to be a school-teacher.

One Saturday afternoon Agatha and Miriam were upstairs dressing. Their bedroom was in or the stable. It was a low room, not very large, and bare. Miriam had nailed on the wall a reproduction of Van Dyck's "St. Catherine." She loved the woman who sat in the window, dressing. Her own window was too small to sit in. But the front one was draped over with honey-suckle and virginia creepers, and looked upon the tree-tops of the oak-wood across the yard, while the little back window, no bigger than a handkerchief, was a loophole to the east, to the down beating up against the beloved round hills.

The two sisters did not talk much to each other. Agatha, who was fair and small and demurest, had rebelled against the home atmosphere, against the distance of "the other class." She was not in the world now, in a fair way to be independent. And she retained an worldly values, an appearance, an manner, on position, which Miriam would fully have ignored.

Both girls liked to be upstairs, out of the way, when Paul came. They performed in come running down, upon the stair-foot door, and see him watching, expectant of them. Miriam stood proudly pulling over her head a crown he had given her. It caught in the first mesh of her hair. But at last she had it on, and the red-crown wooden bench looked well against her cool brown skin. She was a well-developed girl, and very handsome. But in the little looking-glass nailed against the whitewashed wall she could only see a fragment of herself at a time. Agatha had bought a little mirror of her own, which she propped up to see herself. Miriam was near the window. Suddenly she heard the well-known clink of the chain, and she saw Paul fling open the gate, push his bicycle into the yard. She saw him look at the house, and start back away. He walked in a nonchalant fashion, and his bicycle went with him as if it were a live thing.

"Paul's come!" she exclaimed.

"Aren't you glad?" said Agatha cordially.

Miriam stood still in amazement and bewilderment.

"Well, aren't you?" she asked.

"Yes, but I'm not going to let him see it, and think I went to him."

Miriam was startled. She heard him pushing his bicycle in the stable underground, and talking to Jimmy, who had been a partner, and who was stout.

"Well, Jimmy my dad, how are ter? Not too sick an' sad, is he? Why, then, it's a shame, my word is."

She heard the rope run through the hole in the house lifted as head from the lad's canon. How she loved to hear when he thought only the house could hear. But there was a report in her

Eden. She searched curiously at herself to see if she created Paul Morel. She felt there would be some distance at it. Full of relaxed feeling, she was almost too slow to turn him. She stood self-possessed. Then came an agony of new shame. She stood, within herself to a coil of torture. Did she want Paul Morel, and did he know she wanted him? What a subtle infamy upon her! She felt as if her whole soul rushed into flames of shame.

Agatha was drenched first, and ran downstairs. Miriam heard her greet the full gaily, know exactly how brilliant her grey eyes became with that mood. She herself would have felt it bold to have greeted him in such ways. Yet there she stood under the self-accusations of wanting him, tied to that stake of torture. In terror passively she knelted down and prayed:

"O Lord, let me not love Paul Morel. Keep me from loving him, if I ought not to love him."

Something anomalous in the prayer assailed her. She lifted her head and pondered. How could it be wrong to love him? Love was God's gift. And yet it stained her shame. That was because of him, Paul Morel. But, then, it was not his affair, it was her own, between herself and God. She was to be a sacrifice. But it was God's sacrifice, not Paul Morel's or her own. After a few minutes she laid her face in the pillow again, and said:

"But, Lord, if it is Thy will that I should love him, make me love him—as Christ would, who died for the souls of men. Make me love him splendidly, because he is Thy son."

She remained kneeling for some time, quiet still, and deeply moved, her black hair against the red squares and the lavender-spangled squares of the patchwork-quilt. Prayer was almost essential to her. Then she felt how that capture of self-sacrifice, identifying herself with a God who was sacrificed, which given to so many human souls their deepest bliss.

When she went downstairs Paul was lying back in an armchair, holding forth with much vehemence to Agatha, who was scoring a hole promising he had brought to show her. Miriam glanced at the two, and avoided their loving. She went into the parlour to be alone.

It was tedious before she was able to speak to Paul, and then her manner was so distant he thought he had offended her.

Miriam discontinued her practice of going each Thursday evening to the library in Burwood. After calling on Paul regularly during the whole spring, a number of telling incidents and tiny details from his family relations led her to their attitude towards her, and she decided to go no more. So she answered to Paul one evening she would not call at his house again for him on Thursday night.

"Why?" he asked, very short.

"Nothing. Only I'd rather not."

"Very well."

"But," she faltered, "if you'd care to meet me, we could well go together."

"What you suggest?"

"Some-where—where you like."

"I don't meet you anywhere. I don't see why you shouldn't keep calling for me. But if you won't, I don't want to meet you."

So the Thursday evenings which had been so precious to her, and to him, were dropped. He worked instead. Miss Miner smiled with satisfaction at this arrangement.

He would not have it that they were lovers. The animosity between them had been kept so abstract, such a matter of the soul, all thought and weary struggle into consciousness, that he saw it only as a phantasmic friendship. He steadily denied there was anything else between them. Marian was silent, or else she very quietly agreed. He was a fool who did not know what was happening to himself. By such agreement they ignored the remarks and reminiscences of their acquaintances.

"We aren't lovers, we are friends," he said to her. "No know it. Let them talk. What does it matter what they say?"

Sometimes, as they were walking together, she slipped her arm round his. But he always avoided it, and she knew it. It caused a violent conflict in him. While Marian he was always on the high plane of abstraction, when his natural flow of love was transmitted into the fine stream of thought. She would have it so. His voice jolly and, as she put it, flippant, she waited till he came back to her, till the change had taken place in him again, and he was wrestling with his own soul, brooding, passionate in his desire for understanding. And in this passion for understanding her soul lay close to his; she had him all to herself. But he must be made always free.

Then, if the past lay close to him, it caused him almost torture. His consciousness seemed to split. The place where this was touching him ran hot with passion. He was now interpreting hate, and he became cruel to her because of it.

One evening in midsummer Missus called at the house, where they dined. Paul was alone in the kitchen; his mother could be heard moving about upstairs.

"Come and look at the new-plant," said he to the girl.

They went into the garden. The sky behind the woodlet and the church was orange-red, the flower-garden was flooded with a strange warm light that filled every leaf into significance. Paul



passed along a fine row of sweet-peas, gathering a lilac-like hue and there, all cream and pale blue. Making followed, bending the fragrant. To her, flowers appealed with such strength she felt she must make them part of herself. When she bent and brushed a flower, it was as if she and the flower were losing each other. Paul looked her for it. There waited a sort of exposure about the action, something too intimate.

When he had got a fair bunch, they returned to the house. He hovered for a moment to his mother's quiet movement upstairs, then he said:

"Come here, and let me pin them in for you." He arranged them two or three at a time in the bosom of her dress, slipping back now and then to see the effect. "You know," he said, taking the pin out of his mouth, "a woman ought always to arrange her flowers before her glass."

Miriam laughed. She thought flowers ought to be pinned in men's dress without any care. That Paul should take pains to fix her flowers for her was his whim.

He was rather offended at her laughter.

"Some women do—those who look decent," he said.

Miriam laughed again, but earnestly, to show him that man her up with women in a general way. From most men she would have ignored it. But from him it hurt her.

He had nearly finished arranging the flowers when he heard his mother's footstep on the stairs. Shamefully he pushed in the last pin and turned away.

"Don't let mother know," he said.

Miriam picked up her books and stood in the doorway looking with chagrin at the beautiful mess. She would tell her Paul as soon as more, she said.

"Good-evening, Mrs. Morel," she said, in a deferential way, she sounded as if the title she had no right to be there.

"Oh, is it you, Miriam?" replied Mrs. Morel coolly.

But Paul insisted on everybody's accepting his friendship with the girl, and Mrs. Morel was too wise to have any open rupture.

It was not till he was twenty years old that the family could ever afford to go away for a holiday. Mrs. Morel had never been away for a holiday, except to see her sister, once she had been married. Now at last Paul had saved enough money, and they were all going. There was to be a party: some of Annie's friends, one friend of Paul's, a young man in the same office where William had previously been, and Miriam.

It was great excitement waiting for them. Paul and his mother debated it endlessly between them. They wanted a furnished car

cottage for two weeks. She thought one week would be enough, but he insisted on two.

At last they got an answer from Mablethorpe, a cottage such as they wished for thirty shillings a week. There was enormous jubilation. Paul was wild with joy for his mother's sake. She would have a real holiday now. He and she sat at morning porringers what it would be like. Anne came in, and Leonard, and Alice and Kitty. There was wild rejoicing and anticipation. Paul told Miriam. She seemed to brood with joy over it, but the Mores' house rang with excitement.

They went to go on Saturday morning by the coast train. Paul suggested that Miriam should sleep at his house, because it was so far for her to walk. She came down for supper. Everybody was so excited that even Miriam was accepted with warmth. But almost as soon as she entered the dining in the family began to close and fight. He had discovered a poem by Jean Ingelow which mentioned Mablethorpe, and so he must read it to Miriam. He would never have got so far as the discovery of sentimentalism as to read poetry to his own family. But now they contended to listen. Miriam sat in the sofa absorbed in him. She always seemed absorbed in him, and by him, when he was present. Mrs. Morel sat jealously in her own chair. She was going to hear also. And even Anne and the father attended, Morel with his head cocked in one side, like somebody listening to a sermon and feeling sections of the text. Paul ducked his head over the back. He had got now all the audience he cared for. And Mrs. Morel and Anne almost contended with Miriam who should listen best and do his favour. He was in very high fashion.

"But," interrupted Mrs. Morel, "what is the 'Bells of Endorby' that the bells are supposed to ring?"

"It's an old song they used to play on the bells for a warning against water. I suppose the Bells of Endorby was drowned in a flood," he replied. He had not the faintest knowledge what it really was, but he would never have made so low as to confess that to his wonderfuls. They listened and believed him. He believed himself.

"And the people know what that name meant?" said his mother.

"Yes—just like the Scotch when they heard 'The Flowers of the Forest'—and when they used to ring the bells backward for shame."

"How?" said Anne. "A bell sounds the same whether it's rung backwards or forwards."

"But," he said, "if you start with the deep bell and ring up to the high one—*dee—dee—dee—dee—dee—dee—dee—dee!*"

He ran up the scale. Everybody thought it clever. He thought so too. Then, waiting a minute he commenced the poem.

"Hut," said Mrs. Morel curiously when he finished. "But I wish everything that's written weren't so sad."

"I guess you wish they were drowsin' drowsin' lay," said Anne.

There was a pause. Anne got up to clear the table.

Miriam rose to help her with the pan.

"Let me help to wash up," she said.

"Certainly not," said Anne. "You sit down again. There aren't many."

And Miriam, who could not be kinder and quiet, sat down again to look at the book with Paul.

He was master of the party; he talked with no good. And great sadness he suffered but the tin box should be put out at Friday instead of on Wednesday. And he wasn't equal to getting a carriage. His bold wife mother did that.

"Hut!" she cried in a rage. "Hut!"

Paul and Anne got behind the seat, convulsed with drowsed laughter.

"How much will it be to drive to Brook Cottage?" said Mrs. Morel.

"Two shillings."

"Why, how far is it?"

"A good way."

"I don't believe it," she said.

But she scrambled in. There were eight crowded in one old saddle carriage.

"You see," said Mrs. Morel, "it's only threepence each, and if it were a man-cab—"

They drove along. Each cottage they came to, Mrs. Morel cried:

"Is it that? Now, this is it!"

Everybody sat breathless. They drove past. There was a universal sigh.

"I'm thankful it wasn't that house," said Mrs. Morel. "I was frightened." They drove on and on.

At last they descended at a house that stood alone over the dyke by the highway. There was wild excitement because they had to cross a little bridge to get into the front garden. But they loved the house that lay so solitary, with a sea-meadow on one side, and immense expanses of land patched in white barley, yellow oats, red wheat, and green root-crops, flat and stretching level to the sky.

Paul kept awakens. He and his mother ran the show. The most expensive—lodging, food, everything—was sixteen shillings a week

per person. He and Leonard went bathing in the morning. Mabel was wondering around quite early.

"Yes, Paul," his mother called from the bedroom, "eat a piece of bread-and-butter."

"All right," he answered.

And when he got back he saw his mother presiding in state at the breakfast table. The women of the house was young. Her husband was blind, and she did laundry work. So Mrs. Mabel always washed the pots in the kitchen and made the beds.

"Has you said you'd have a real holiday," said Paul, "and now you work?"

"Work!" she exclaimed. "What are you talking about!"

He loved to go with her across the fields to the village and the sea. She was afraid of the plank bridges, and he abused her for being a baby. On the whole he stuck to her as if he were her man.

Miriam did not get much of him, except, perhaps, when all the others went to the "Coons." Coons were unaccountably stupid to Miriam, so he thought they were to himself also, and he preached peevishly to Anne about the futility of listening to them. Yet he, too, knew all their songs, and sang them along the roads raptorially. And if he found himself listening, the stupidity pleased him very much. Yet to Anne he said:

"Such stuff there isn't a grain of intelligence in it. Nobody with more gumption than a grasshopper could go and sit and listen." And to Miriam he said, with much scorn of Anne and the others: "I suppose they're at the 'Coons'!"

It was queer to see Miriam singing coon songs. She had a straight chin that went in a perpendicular line from the lower lip to the nose. She always surrounded Paul of some red Bertie's angel when she sang, even when it was:

"Come down lower's lane  
For a walk with me, talk with me."

Only when he slouched, or at evening when the others were at the "Coons," she had him to herself. He talked to her madly about his love of horizontals: how they, the great levels of sky and land in Lincolnshire, meant to him the eternity of the will, just as the bowed Norman arches of the church, repeating themselves, meant the dogged heaping forward of the persistent human soul, on and on, nobody knows where; in consideration to the perpendicular lines and to the Gothic arch, which, he said, kept up at heaven and touched the earth and lay itself in the divine. Himself, he said, was Norman, Miriam was Gothic. She bowed in assent even to that.

One evening he and she went up the great sweeping shore of sand towards Theedlothorpe. The long breakers plunged and ran in a line of foam along the coast. It was a warm evening. There was not a figure but themselves on the far stretch of sand, no noise but the sound of the sea. Paul loved to see it changing at the land. He loved to feel himself between the noise of it and gentleness of the sandy shore. Miriam was with him. Everything goes very intense. It was quite dark when they turned again. The way home was through a gap in the sandhills, and then along a misted grass road between two dykes. The country was black and cold. From behind the sandhills came the whisper of the sea. Paul and Miriam walked in silence. Suddenly he started. The white of his blood seemed to burst into flame, and he could scarcely breathe. An enormous orange moon was staring at them from the rim of the sandhills. He stood still, looking at it.

"Aid!" cried Miriam, when she saw it.

He remained perfectly still, staring at the luminous and muddy mass, the only thing in the far-reaching darkness of the land. His heart beat heavily, the muscles of his arms contracted.

"What is it?" murmured Miriam, waiting for him.

He turned and looked at her. She stood beside him, far even in shadow. Her face, covered with the darkness of her hat, was watching him unseen. But she was breathing. She was slightly afraid—deeply moved and religious. That was her best state. He was impatient against it. His blood was concentrated like a flame in his chest. But he could not get closer to her. There were flames in his blood. But somehow she ignored them. She was expecting some religious state in him. Still yearning, she was half aware of his passion, and gazed at him, troubled.

"What is it?" she murmured again.

"It's the moon," he answered, frowning.

"Yes," she answered. "Isn't it wonderful?" She was curious about him. The creek was gone.

He did not know himself what was the matter. He was naturally so young, and their intimacy was so abstract, he did not know he wanted to crush her on to his breast to ease the ache there. He was afraid of her. The fact that he might want her as a man made a woman had as far been suppressed into a shadow. When she shook in her convulsed, cold curves from the thoughts of such a thing, he had wipened to the depths of his soul. And now she "purify" prevented even their first love-act. It was as if the cold severely stand the shock of physical love, even a passionate one, and then he was too shrinking and sensitive to give it.

As they walked along the dark far-meadow he watched the

moon and did not speak. She plucked beside him. He hated her, for she seemed so sure were to make him doubt himself. Looking ahead—he saw the one light in the darkness, the window of their lamp-lit cottage.

He loved to think of his mother, and the other jolly people.

"Well, everybody else has been so long ago!" said his mother as they returned.

"What does that matter?" he cried irritably. "I can go a walk if I like, can't I?"

"And I should have thought you could get some supper with the cat," said Mrs. Moxel.

"I shall please myself," he retorted. "It's my life. I shall do as I like."

"Very well," said his mother cordially, "then do as you like." And she took no further notice of him that evening. Usually he pretended neither to notice nor to care about, but not reading. Miriam read also, cultivating herself. Mrs. Moxel hated her for making her son like this. She watched Paul growing restless, proud, and unmanageable. For she she put the blame on Miriam. Anne and all her friends joined against the girl. Miriam had no friend of her own, only Paul. But she did not suffer so much, because she despised the tribulation of those other people.

And Paul hated her because, somehow, she spoilt his ease and unmanageable. And he writhed himself with a feeling of humiliation.

*Stops in Love*

Alexander finished his apprenticeship, and got a job on the A. electrical plant at Milton Pa. He earned very little, but had a good chance of getting on. But he was wild and restless. He did not drink nor gamble. Yet he somehow contrived to get lean and line stripes, always through some hot-headed thoughtlessness. Either he went rabbiting in the woods, like a grouse, or he stayed in Nottingham all night instead of coming home, or he miscalculated his dive into the canal at Eastwood, and scored his chest and rib cases of wounds on the raw stones and dirt at the bottom.

He had not been at his work many months when again he did not come home one night.

"Do you know where Arthur is?" asked Paul at breakfast.

"I do not," replied his mother.

"He is a fool," said Paul. "And if he did anything I shouldn't mind. But no, he simply can't come away from a game of whist, or else he must see a girl home from the dancing rink—quite propositionally—and so can't get home. He's a fool."

"I don't know that it would make it any better if he did something to make us all ashamed," said Mrs. Mabel.

"Well, I should expect him more," said Paul.

"I very much doubt it," said his mother coldly.

They went on with breakfast.

"Are you awfully fond of him?" Paul asked his mother.

"What do you ask that for?"

"Because they say a woman always likes the youngest best."

"She may do—but I don't. No, he worries me."

"And you'd actually rather he was good?"

"I'd rather he showed some of a man's common sense."

Paul was sure and unstable. He also worried his mother very often. She saw the sunshine going out of him, and she missed it.

As they were finishing breakfast came the postman with a letter from Derby. Mrs. Mabel screwed up her eyes to look at the address.

"Give it here, Mabel eye!" exclaimed her son, snatching it away from her.

She stared, and almost bowed her eyes.

"It's from your son, Arthur," he said.

"What son?" cried Mrs. Morel.

"My dearest Mother," Paul said, "I don't know what made me such a fool. I want you to come and fetch me back from here. I came with Jack Deodun yesterday, instead of going to work, and refused. He said he was sick of wearing the coat of a coal cut, and, like the idiot you know I am, I came away with him.

"I have taken the King's shilling, but perhaps if you came for me they would let me go back with you. I was a fool when I did it. I don't want to be in the army. My dear mother, I am nothing but a trouble to you. But if you get me out of this, I promise I will have more sense and consideration. . . ."

Mrs. Morel sat down in her rocking-chair.

"Well, now," she cried, "let him stop."

"Yes," said Paul, "let him stop."

There was silence. The mother sat with her hands folded in her apron, her head set, thinking.

"If I'm not right," she cried suddenly, "fick!"

"Now," said Paul, beginning to frown, "you're not going to worry your soul out about this, do you hear?"

"I suppose I'm to take it as a blessing," she dashed, turning on her son.

"You're not going to mount it up to a tragedy, so there," he returned.

"The fool!—the young fool!" she cried.

"He'll look well in uniform," said Paul ironically.

His mother turned on him like a fury.

"Oh, well but," she cried, "that is my son!"

"He should get on the cavalry regiment; he'll have the time of his life, and will look an awful devil."

"Devil! devil!—a mighty devil indeed!—a common soldier!"

"Well," said Paul, "what am I but a common clerk?"

"A good deal, my boy!" cried his mother, stung.

"What?"

"At any rate, a man, and not a thing in a red coat."

"I shouldn't mind being in a red coat—or dark blue, that would suit me better—if they didn't hate me about too much."

But his mother had ceased to listen.

"Just as he was getting on, or might have been getting on, at his job—a young policeman—here he goes and ruins himself for life. What good will he be, do you think, after this?"

"It may look like this shape temporarily," said Paul.

"Look like this shape!—look what narrow there was out of his



house. A splendid dinner-table!—nothing but a lady that makes movements when a house is silent! It's a fine thing!"

"I can't understand why it upsets you," said Paul.

"No, perhaps you can't. But I understand!" and she set back in her chair, her chin on one hand, holding her elbow with the other, immersed up with wrath and disgust.

"And shall you go to Derby?" asked Paul.

"Yes."

"It's no good."

"I'll see for myself."

"And why on earth don't you let him stop. It's just what he wants."

"Of course," cried the mother, "you know what he wants!"

She got ready and went by the first train to Derby, where she saw her son and the sergeant. It was, however, no good.

When Mordl was leaving his chamber at the evening, she said suddenly:

"I've had to go to Derby to-day."

The minor turned up his eyes, showing the wisdom in his black face.

"Has ter, ha. What took thee there?"

"That Arthur!"

"Oh—er? what's agate now?"

"He's only settled."

Mordl put down his knife and leaned back in his chair.

"May," he said, "that he sleep 'at'?"

"And is going down to Aldenham to-morrow."

"Well!" exclaimed the minor. "That's a wonder." He considered it a moment, said "H'm?" and proceeded with his dinner. Suddenly his face contracted with wrath. "I hope he may never set foot of my house again," he said.

"The kin!" cried Miss Mordl. "Saying such a thing!"

"I do," repeated Mordl. "A fool as runs away for a soldier, let 'em look after 'em! I'll do no more for 'em."

"A fine sight you have done at it is," she said.

And Mordl was almost ashamed to go to his public-house that evening.

"Well, did you go?" said Paul to his mother when he came home.

"I did."

"And could you see him?"

"Yes."

"And what did he say?"

"He blabbered when I came away."

"Eh?"

"And so did I, so you needn't 'h'm'!"

Mrs. Murel frowned after her son. She knew he would not like the army. He did not. The discipline was intolerable to him.

"But the doctor," she said with some pride to Paul, "said he was perfectly proportioned—almost exactly. All his measurements were correct. He is good-looking, you know."

"He's awfully nice-looking. But he doesn't fetch the girls like William, does he?"

"No, it's a different character. He's a good deal like his father, irresponsible."

To console his mother, Paul did not go much to Willey Farm as this time. And in the autumn exhibition of students' work in the Crafts he had two studies, a landscape in water-colour and a still life in oil, both of which had first-prize awards. He was highly excited.

"What do you think I've got for my pictures, mother?" he asked, coming home one evening. She saw by his eyes he was glad. Her face flushed.

"Now, how should I know, my boy?"

"A first prize for those glass jars—"

"Eh?"

"And a first prize for that sketch up at Willey Farm."

"Dad first?"

"Yes."

"Eh?"

There was a very bright look about her, though she said nothing.

"It's nice," he said, " isn't it?"

"It is."

"Why don't you praise me up to the stars?"

She laughed.

"I should have the trouble of dragging you down again," she said.

But she was full of joy, nevertheless. William had brought her his sporting trophies. She kept them well, and she did not forget a lost tooth. Arthur was handsome—was kind, a good specimen—and warm and generous, and probably would do well in the end. But Paul was going to distinguish himself. She had a great belief in him, she more because he was unaware of his own powers. There was so much to come out of him. Life for her was rich with promise. She was to see herself fulfilled. Not for nothing had been her struggle.

Several times during the exhibition Mrs. Murel went to the

Castle unknown to Paul. She wandered down the long room looking at the other exhibits. Yes, they were good. But they had not in them a certain something which she demanded for her satisfaction. Secret made her jealous, they were so good. She looked at them a long time trying to find fault with them. Then suddenly she had a shock that made her heart beat. "There hung Paul's picture!" She knew it as if it were printed on her heart.

"Name—Paul Mason—Paint 1908!"

It looked so strange, there in public, on the walls of the Castle gallery, where in her lifetime she had seen so many pictures. And she glanced round to see if anyone had noticed her again in front of the same shock.

But she felt a proud woman. When she met well-dressed ladies going home to the Park, she thought to herself:

"Yes, you look very well—but I wonder if your son had two first prizes in the Castle."

And she walked on, as proud a little woman as any in Nottingham. And Paul felt he had done something for her, if only a trifle. All his work was here.

One day, as he was going up Castle Gate, he met Miriam. He had seen her on the Sunday, and had not expected to meet her on town. She was walking with a rather striking woman, blonde, with a radiant expression, and a defiant carriage. It was strange how Miriam, in her bowed, meditative bearing, looked dwarfed beside this woman with the handsome shoulders. Miriam watched Paul watchingly. His gaze was on the stranger, who ignored him. The girl saw his gaze and spent her time on him.

"Hello!" he said, "you didn't tell me you were coming to town."

"No," replied Miriam, half apologetically. "I drove in to Castle Market with father."

He looked at her companion.

"I've told you about Mrs. Dawes," said Miriam, briefly; she was nervous. "Clara, do you know Paul?"

"I think I've seen him before," replied Mrs. Dawes indifferently, as the shock hands with him. She had a small grey eye, a skin like white ivory, and a full mouth, with a slightly lifted upper lip that did not know whether it was raised in scorn or all men or out of experience to be lifted, but which belied the firmest. She turned her head back, as if she had drawn away in contempt, perhaps from men also. She wore a large, dowdy hat of black beaver, and a sort of slightly affected simple dress that made her look rather neck-blue. She was evidently poor, and had not much taste. Miriam usually looked also.

"Where have you seen me?" Paul asked of the women.

She looked at him as if she would not trouble to answer. Then:

"Walking with Louise Trevelyan," she said.

Louise was one of the "spiral" girls.

"Why, do you know her?" he asked.

She did not answer. He turned to Miriam.

"Where are you going?" he asked.

"To the Castle."

"What time are you going home to?"

"I am driving with father. I wish you could come too. What time are you free?"

"You know not all right to-night, dawn it."

And quietly the two women moved on.

Paul remembered that Clara Dawson was the daughter of an old friend of Mrs. Levens. Miriam had sought her out because she had once been spiral overtop at Jordan's, and because her husband, Baxter Dawson, was smith for the factory, making the tools for couple instruments, and so on. Through her Miriam felt she got into closest contact with Jordan's, and could estimate better Paul's position. But Mrs. Dawson was separated from her husband, and had taken up Women's Rights. She was supposed to be clever. It interested Paul.

Baxter Dawson he knew and disliked. The smith was a man of sixty-one or sixty-two. He came occasionally through Paul's corner—a big, wiry old man, who stopped to look at, and hand-son. There was a peculiar stiffness between himself and his wife. He had the same white skin, with a clear, golden tinge. His hair was of soft brown, his mustache was golden. And he had a slender defiance in his bearing and manner. But there came the difference. His eyes, dark brown and quick-shifting, were disquieting. They probed very deeply, and his eyelids hung over them in a way that was half hate. His mouth too, was sensual. His whole manner was of covert defiance, as if he were ready to knock anybody down who disapproved of him—perhaps because he really disapproved of himself.

From the first day he had hated Paul. Finding the lad's impersonal, deliberate gaze of an artist on his face, he got into a rage.

"What are you looking at?" he asked, halting.

The boy glanced away. But the smith used to stand behind the counter and talk to his Fagelmouth. His speech was dirty, with a kind of restraint. Again he stared the youth with his cool, critical gaze fixed on his face. The smith started round as if he had been stung.

"What's yer lookin' at, three layfards o' pap?" he asked.

The boy shrugged his shoulders slightly.

"Why yer——" shouted Dawes.

"Leave him alone," said Mr. Pipplesworth, in that commanding voice which means, "he's only one of your good little sons who can't help it."

Since that time the boy used to look at the man every time he came through with the same curious criticism, glancing away before he met the smith's eye. It made Dawes furious. They stared each other in silence.

Given Dawes had no children. When she had left her husband the house had been broken up, and she had gone to live with her mother. Dawes lodged with his aunt. In the same house was a sister-in-law, and it was here Paul knew that the girl, Louise Trevan, was now Dawes' woman. She was a handsome, restless beauty, who looked at the youth, and yet flushed if he walked along in the street with her as she went home.

The next time he went to see Miriam it was Saturday evening. She had a fire in the parlour, and was waiting for him. The children, except her father and mother and the young children, had gone out, so the two had the parlour together. It was a long, low, warm room. There were three of Paul's small sketches on the wall, and his photo was on the mantelpiece. On the table and on the high old restored piano were bowls of coloured leaves. He sat in the armchair, she crouched on the hearthrug near his feet. The glow was warm on her handsome, passive face as she looked down like a dreamer.

"What did you think of Mrs. Dawes?" she asked quietly.

"She doesn't look very amiable," he replied.

"No, but don't you think she's a fine woman?" she said, in a deep tone.

"Yes—as nature. But without a grain of sense. I like her for some things. Is she disagreeable?"

"I don't think so. I think she's dissatisfied."

"What with?"

"Well—how would you like to be tied for life to a man like that?"

"Why did she marry him, then, if she was to have revolutions so soon?"

"Ah, why did she?" repeated Miriam bitterly.

"And I should have thought she had enough fight in her to match him," he said.

Miriam bowed her head.

"Ah?" she queried satirically. "What makes you think so?"

"Look at her mouth—made for passion—and the very set-back of her throat——" He threw his head back at Clara's defiant manner.

Miriam bowed a little lower,

"Yes," she said.

There was a silence for some moments, while he thought of Clara.

"And what was the thing you liked about her?" she asked.

"I don't know—her skin and the texture of her—her—I don't know—there's a sort of fervent somewhere in her. I appreciate her as an artist, that's all."

"Yes."

He wondered why Miriam crouched there bowing in that strange way. It annoyed him.

"You don't really like her, do you?" he asked the girl.

She looked at him with her great, startled dark eyes.

"I do," she said.

"You don't—you can't—not really."

"Then what?" she asked slowly.

"Oh, I don't know—perhaps you like her because she's got a grudge against me."

That was probably one of his own reasons for liking Mrs. Dawson, but this did not occur to him. They were alone. There had come into his forehead a building of the brow which was becoming habitual with him, particularly when he was with Miriam. She longed to smooth it away, and she was afraid of it. It marked the stamp of a man who was not her man in Fred Blair.

There were some crimson berries among the leaves on the bowl. He reached over and pulled out a handful.

"If you put red berries in your hair," he said, "why would you look like some witch or priestess, and never like a reveller?"

She laughed with a naked, painful sound.

"I don't know," she said.

His vigorous warm hands were playing excitedly with the berries.

"Why can't you laugh?" he said. "You never laugh laughter. You only laugh when something is odd or incongruous, and that is almost never to hurt you."

She tilted her head as if he were scolding her.

"I wish you could laugh at me just for one minute—just for one minute. I feel as if it would do something here."

"But"—and she looked up at him with eyes frightened and struggling—"I do laugh at you—I do."

"Never! There's always a load of humanity. When you laugh

I could always cry; it seems as if it does up your suffering. Oh, you make me half the hopes of my very soul and cognate."

Slowly she shook her head despairingly.

"I'm sure I don't want to," she said.

"I'm so damned spiritual with you always!" he cried.

She remained silent, thinking. "Then why don't you be other-wise?" But he saw her cowering, brooding figure, and it seemed to tear him in two.

"But, there, it's autumn," he said, "and everybody feels like a disembodied spirit then."

There was still another silence. This peculiar sadness between them startled her soul. He seemed so beautiful with his eyes gone dark, and looking as if they were deep as the deepest well.

"You make me so spiritual!" he lamented. "And I don't want to be spiritual!"

She took her finger from her mouth with a little pop, and looked up at him almost challenging. But still her soul was asked in her great dark eyes, and there was the same yearning appeal upon her. If he could have known her in abstract poetry he would have done so. But he could not kiss her thus—and she seemed to leave no other way. And she yearned to him.

He gave a half laugh.

"Well," he said, "get that French and we'll do some—some Verlaines."

"Yes," she said in a deep tone, almost of resignation. And she rose and put the books. And her rather red, nervous hands looked so pitiful, he was made to comfort her and kiss her. But then he dared not—he could not. There was something prevented him. His hands were wrong for her. They continued the sending all over o'clock, when they went into the kitchen, and Paul was natural and jolly again with the father and mother. His eyes were dark and shining; there was a kind of fascination about him.

When he went into the barn for his bicycle he found the front wheel punctured.

"Fetch me a drop of water in a bowl," he said to her. "I shall be here, and then I'll wash it."

He lighted the hurricane lamp, took off his coat, turned up the bicycle, and set speedily to work. Myriam came with the bowl of water and stood close to him, watching. She loved to see his hands doing things. He was then and vigorous, with a kind of cadence even to his most hasty movements. And here at his work he seemed to forget her. She loved him absolutely. She wanted to rest her hands down his sides. She always wanted to embrace him, so long as he did not want her.

"There!" he said, rising suddenly. "Now, could you have done it quicker?"

"No!" she laughed.

He straightened himself. His back was towards her. She put her two hands on his sides, and ran them quickly down.

"You are so fast!" she said.

He laughed, hearing her voice, but his blood ceased to a swirl of flames by her hands. She did not seem to realize him in all this. He might have been an object. She never realized the male he was.

He lighted his bicycle-lamp, bounced the machine on the bare floor to see that the tyres were sound, and fastened his coat.

"That's all right!" he said.

She was trying the brakes, that she knew were broken.

"Did you have them mended?" she asked.

"No!"

"But why didn't you?"

"The back one goes on a bit."

"But it's not safe."

"I can use my toe."

"I wish you'd had them mended," she murmured.

"Don't worry—come to tea to-morrow, with Edgar."

"Shall we?"

"Do—about four. I'll come to meet you."

"Very well."

She was pleased. They went across the dark yard to the gate. Looking across, he saw through the uncurtained window of the kitchen the heads of Mr. and Mrs. Levens in the warm glow. It looked so cozy. The road, with pine-trees, was quite black in front.

"Till to-morrow," he said, jumping on his bicycle.

"You'll wait here, won't you?" she pleaded.

"Yes."

His voice already came out of the darkness. She stood a moment watching the light from his lamp race into obscurity along the ground. She turned very slowly indoors. Owen was whodding up over the wood, his dog bounding after him, half-muzzled. For the rest the world was full of darkness, and silent, save for the breathing of cattle in their stalls. She prayed silently for his safety that night. When he left her, she often lay in anxiety, wondering if he had got home safely.

He dropped down the hills on his bicycle. The roads were pretty, so he had to let it go. He felt a pleasure as the machine plunged over the second, steeper drop in the hill. "Here goes!" he said. It was risky, because of the curve in the darkness at the



bottom, and because of the bitterest weapons with drinking suggestions along. His biopsy seemed to fall beneath him, and he loved it. Rockiness is almost a man's revenge on his woman. He feels he is not valued, so he will risk destroying himself to deprive her altogether.

The stain on the table seemed to leap like grasshoppers, alive upon the blackness, as he spun past. Then there was the long dark home.

"See, mother!" he said, as he threw her the berries and leaves on to the table.

"H'm!" she said, glancing at them, then away again. See as coming, alone, as she always did.

"Aren't they pretty?"

"Yes."

He knew she was cross with him. After a few minutes he said:

"Edgar and Miriam are coming to tea to-morrow."

She did not answer.

"You don't mind?"

Still she did not answer.

"Do you?" he asked.

"You know whether I mind or not."

"I don't see why you should. I have plenty of meals there."

"You do."

"Then why do you begrudge them tea?"

"I begrudge whom tea?"

"What are you so hard on?"

"Oh, my mother! You've asked her to tea, it's quite sufficient. She'll come."

He was very angry with his mother. He knew it was surely Miriam she objected to. He threw off his boots and went to bed.

Paul went to meet his friends the next afternoon. He was glad to see them coming. They arrived home at about four o'clock. Everywhere was clean and still for Sunday afternoon. Mrs. Mabel sat in her black dress and black apron. She rose to meet the visitors. With Edgar she was cordial, but with Miriam cold and rather grudging. Yet Paul thought she yet looked as nice in her brown calicoes frock.

He helped his mother to get tea ready. Miriam would have gladly profited, but was afraid. He was rather proud of his home. There was about it now, he thought, a certain distinction. The chairs were only wooden, and the sofa was old. But the hearthrug and cushions were cozy, the pictures were joints in good taste; there was a simplicity in everything, and plenty of boxes. He was

never ashamed in the front of his house, nor was Miriam of hers, because both were what they should be, and were. And then he was proud of the table, the china was pretty, the cloth was fine. It did not matter that the spoons were not silver nor the knives heavy-handed: everything looked nice. Mrs. Morel had managed wonderfully while her children were growing up, so that nothing was out of place.

Miriam talked books a little. That was her unfailing topic. But Mrs. Morel was not curious, and turned soon to Edgar.

At first Edgar and Miriam used to go into Mrs. Morel's pew. Morel never went to chapel, preferring the public-house. Mrs. Morel, like a little champion, sat at the head of her pew, Paul at the other end, and at first Miriam sat next to him. Then the chapel was like home. It was a pretty place, with dark pews and stuns, elegant pillars, and flowers. And the same people had sat in the same places ever since he was a boy. It was wonderfully sweet and soothing to sit there for an hour and a half, next to Miriam, and near to his mother, seeing his two lovers under the spell of the place of worship. Then he felt warm and happy and religious at once. And after chapel he walked home with Miriam, while Mrs. Morel spent the rest of the evening with her old friend, Mrs. Bama. He was lonely alive on his walks on Sunday nights with Edgar and Miriam. He never went past the pile of rags, by the lighted lamp-house, the tall black hand-stocks and lines of work, past the flues spinning slowly like shadows, without the feeling of Miriam returning to him, keen and almost unbearable.

She did not very long occupy the Morel's pew. Her father took one for themselves soon more. It was under the little gallery, opposite the Morel's. When Paul and his mother came in the chapel the Levers' pew was always empty. He was anxious for her she would not come: it was so far, and there were so many noisy Sundays. Then, often very late indeed, she came in, with her long stride, her head bowed, her face hidden under her hat of dark green velvet. Her face, as she sat opposite, was always in shadow. But it gave him a very keen feeling, as if all his soul stirred within him, to see her there. It was not the usual glow, happiness, and peace, that he felt in having his mother at chapel: something more wonderful, less human, and tinged to reality by a pain, as if there were something he could not get to.

At this time he was beginning to question the orthodox creed. He was twenty-one, and she was thirty. She was beginning to doubt the spring: he became so wild, and hurt her so much. All the way he went steadily smashing her beliefs. Edgar enjoyed it. He was by nature critical and rather disapproving. But Miriam

suffered agonizing pain, as, with an instinct like a hawk, the man she loved entered her religion in which she lived and moved and had her being. But he did not spare her. He was cruel. And when they went alone he was even more fierce, as if he would kill her soul. His blind hot beliefs till she almost lost consciousness.

"She walks—she walks as she carries him off from me," Mrs. Milare cried in her hour when Paul had gone. "She's not like an ordinary woman, who can leave me my share in him. She wants to absorb him. She wants to draw him out and absorb him till there is nothing left of him, even for himself. He will never be a man on his own feet—she will rack him up." So she mothered, and baited and brooded him.

And he, coming home from his walks with Milare, was wild with torture. He walked leaving his legs and with clotted feet, going at a great rate. Then, brought up against a stile, he stood for some minutes, and did not move. There was a great hollow of darkness opening him, and on the black uplugs patches of tiny lights, and in the lowest trough of the night, a stare of the pit. It was all weird and dreadful. Why was he torn so, almost bewildered, and unable to move? Why did his mother sit at home and suffer? He knew she suffered badly. But why should that? And why did he hate Milare, and feel so cruel towards her, at the thought of his mother? If Milare caused his mother suffering, then he hated her—and he easily hated her. Why did she make him feel as if he were uncertain of himself, insecure, an indefinite thing, as if he had not sufficient strength to prevent the night and the space breaking over him? How he hated her! And then, what a rush of tenderness and humility!

Suddenly he plunged on again, running home. His mother saw on him the marks of some agony, and she said nothing. But he had to make her talk to him. Then she was angry with him for going so far with Milare.

"Why don't you like her, mother?" he cried in despair.

"I don't know, my boy," she replied patiently. "I'm sure I've used to like her. I've tried and tried, but I can't—I can't."

And he felt dreary and hopeless between the two.

Spring was the worst time. He was changeable, and intense and cruel. So he decided to stay from her. Then came the hour when he knew Milare was expecting him. His mother watched him growing restless. He could not go on with his work. He could do nothing. It was as if something were drawing his soul out towards Willey Farm. Then he put on his hat and went, saying nothing. And his mother knew he was gone. And as soon as he was on the

way he smiled with relief. And when he was with her he was cruel again.

One day in March he lay on the bank of Motherton, with Miriam sitting beside him. It was a gleaming, white-and-blue day. Day clouds, so brilliant, went by overhead, while shadows rode along on the water. The clear spaces in the sky were of clear, cold blue. Paul lay on his back in the old grass, looking up. He could not bear to look at Miriam. She seemed to want him, and he refused. He refused all the time. He wanted now to give her passion and tenderness, and he could not. He felt that she wanted the soul out of his body, and not him. All his strength and energy she drew into herself through some channel which united them. She did not want to meet him, so that there were not of them, man and woman together. She wanted to draw all of him into her. It urged him to an uneasy like madness, which fascinated him, in deepening nights.

He was discussing Michael Angelo. It felt to her as if she were fingering the very quivering tissue, the very protuberances of life, as she heard him. It gave her her deepest satisfaction. And as the soul is frightened here. There he lay in the white intensity of his search, and his voice gradually filled her with fear, so loud it was, almost unknown, as if in a trance.

"Don't talk any more," she pleaded softly, laying her hand on his forehead.

He lay quite still, almost unable to move. His body was somehow discarded.

"Why not? Are you tired?"

"Yes, and it worries you out."

He laughed shortly, smiling.

"You always make me like it," he said.

"I don't wish to," she said, very low.

"Not when you've gone too far, and you feel you can't bear it? But your consciousness will always tell it of me. And I suppose I want it."

He went on, in his dead fashion:

"If only you could want me, and not want what I can feel off for you!"

"If," she cried bitterly—"If! Why, what would you let me take you?"

"Then it's my fault," he said, and, gathering himself together, he got up and began to talk rationally. He felt uncomfortable. In a vague way he hated her for it. And he knew he was so much to blame himself. This, however, did not prevent his hating her.

One evening about this time he had walked along the fence road with her. They stood by the pasture leading down to the wood, unable to part. As the stars came out the clouds closed. They had glimpses of their own constellations, Orion, towards the west. His jewels glimmered for a moment, his dog ran low, struggling with difficulty through the spaces of clouds.

Orion was for them chief in significance among the constellations. They had gazed at him in their strings, recharged hours of feeling, until they seemed themselves to live in every one of his stars. This evening Paul had been moody and perverse. Orion had seemed just an ordinary constellation to him. He had fought against his gloomier and fluctuating. Marian was watching her lover's mood carefully. But he said nothing that gave him away, till the moment came to part, when he stood lowering pleasantly at the gathered clouds, behind which the great constellation must be working still.

There was to be a little party at his house the next day, at which she was to attend.

"I shan't come to meet you," he said.

"Oh, very well, it's not very nice of you," she replied slowly.

"It's not that—only they don't like me so. They say I am more for you than for them. And you understand, don't you? You know it's only friendship."

Marian was unsettled and hurt for him. It had cost him an effort. She left him, wanting to spare him any further humiliation. A fine rain blew in her face as she walked along the road. She was hurt deep down; and she despised him for being blown about by any wind of authority. And in her heart of hearts, unconsciously, she felt that he was trying to get away from her. This she would never have acknowledged. She pitied him.

At this time Paul became an important factor in Jordan's warehouse. Mr. Pappleworth left to set up a business of his own, and Paul remained with Mr. Jordan as general manager. His wages were to be raised to thirty shillings at the year-end, if things went well.

Still on Friday nights Marian often came down the bar French lanes. Paul did not go so frequently to Wilby Farm, and she grieved at the thought of her vicar's son's coming to an early marriage; they both loved to be together, in spite of discord. So they read *Elaine*, and did compositions, and did highly cultured.

Friday night was reckoning night for the women. Edward "reckoned"—shared up the money of the stall—either at the New Inn at Borey or in his own house, according as his fellow-traveller wished. Another had turned a non-drinker, so now the men reckoned at Edward's house.

Annie, who had been teaching away, was at home again. She was still a spinster, and she was engaged to be married. Paul was studying drugs.

Moor was always in good spirits on Friday evening, unless the week's earnings were small. He bawled immediately after his dinner, prepared to get washed. It was dehuman for the women to absent themselves while the men reckoned. Women were not supposed to spy into such a masculine privacy as the butcher's reckoning, nor were they to know the exact amount of the week's earnings. So, whilst her father was spluttering in the scullery Anne went out to spend an hour with a neighbour. Mrs. Moor attended to her baking.

"Shut that door!" bawled Moor furiously.

Anne laughed at behind her, and was gone.

"If the copper is again while I'm within' me, I'll ma'e 'er fly for miles," he threatened from the midst of his soap-suds. Paul and the mother frowned to hear him.

Presently he came running out of the scullery, with the soapy water dripping from him, shivering with cold.

"Oh, my ar!" he said. "Where's my towel?"

He was hanging on a chair to warm before the fire, otherwise he would have bawled and blustered. He squatted on his heels before the hot baking fire to dry himself.

"T-d-d!" he went, perspiring to shudder with cold.

"Goodness, man, don't be such a kid!" said Mrs. Moor. "It's not cold."

"There isn't nothin' much cold as wash the flesh o' that scullery," said the miner, as he rubbed his hair. "now it's a me'asure!"

"And I shouldn't make that fun," replied his wife.

"No, she'd drop down stiff, as dead as a door-nail, w' they wash 'er."

"Why is a door-nail colder than anything else?" asked Paul, curious.

"Oh, I dunno; that's what they say," replied his father.

"But there's that much draught o' yon scullery, as it blows through your ribs like through a five-barrel gun."

"It would have some difficulty in blowing through yon," said Mrs. Moor.

Moor looked down ruefully at his wife.

"Ma!" he exclaimed. "I'm never to be a damned scholar. My bones fair get out on me."

"I should like to know where," retorted his wife.

"In yon scullery! I'm nobbut a tank o' happen."

Mrs. Moor laughed. He had still a wonderfully young body,

muscular, without any fat. His skin was smooth and clear. It might have been the body of a man of twenty-eight, except that there were, perhaps, too many blue veins, like tattoo-marks, where the coal-dust remained under the skin, and that his chest was too hairy. But he put his hand on his sides carefully. It was his fixed belief that, because he did not get fat, he was as thin as a starved rat.

Paul looked at his father's thick, brownish hands all scarred, with broken nails, rubbing the fine smoothness of his sides, and the incongruity struck him. It seemed strange they were the same flesh.

"I suppose," he said to his father, "you had a good figure once."

"Eh?" exclaimed the minee, glowing round, startled and cold, like a child.

"He had," exclaimed Mrs. Marel, "if he didn't hustle himself up as if he was trying to get in the smallest space he could."

"Ma!" exclaimed Marel—"was a good figure! I was nine months more o' a skeleton."

"Ma!" cried his wife, "don't be such a palmer!"

"Stomach!" he said. "That's never known me but what I looked as if I was gone' off in a rapid decline."

She sat and laughed.

"You've had a constitution like iron," she said; "and never a man had a better start, if it was body that counted. You should have seen him as a young man," she cried suddenly to Paul, drawing herself up to inspect her husband's once handsome, beaming.

Marel watched her closely. He saw again the passion she had had for him. It blazed upon her for a moment. He was shy, rather stared, and humble. Yet again he felt his old glow. And then immediately he felt the run he had made during those years. He wanted to hustle about, to run away from it.

"Of's my back a bit of a wash," he asked her.

His wife brought a well-scoped flannel and clapped it on his shoulder. He gave a jump.

"Eh, the monkey took 'way!" he cried. "Cold as death!"

"You ought to have been a salamander," she laughed, washing his back. It was very rarely she would do anything so personal for him. The children did those things.

"The new world won't be half hot enough for you," she added.

"No," he said, "tha'll see as it's draughty for me."

But she had finished. She wiped him as a domestic flannel, and went upstairs, returning immediately with his stuffing-wool. When he was dried he struggled into his shirt. Then, noddily and dilly, with hair on end, and his flannel-shirt hanging over his

pit-trousers, he stood watching the garments he was going to put on. He turned them, he pulled them inside-out, he scolded them.

"Goodness, good!" cried Mrs. Morel, "got dressed!"

"Shouldn't like to slap myself into bedclothes as good as a tub of water!" he said.

At last he took off his pit-trousers and donned decent black. He did all this on the hearthrug, as he would have done if Annie and her familiar friends had been present.

Mrs. Morel turned the bread in the press. Then from the red earthenware partition of dough that stood in a corner she took another handful of paste, worked it to the proper shape, and dropped it into a tin. As she was doing so Barker knocked and entered. He was a quiet, compact little man, who looked as if he would go through a stone wall. His black hair was cropped short, his head was bony. Like most miners, he was pale, but healthy and stout.

"Barker, mine," he nodded to Mrs. Morel, and he seated himself with a sigh.

"Good-evening," she replied cordially.

"That's made my boots crack," said Morel.

"I daresay as I have," said Barker.

He sat, as the men always did in Mrs. Morel's kitchen, affecting himself asleep.

"How's mine?" she asked of him.

He had told her some time back:

"We're expectin' on third last now, you see."

"Well," he answered, rubbing his head, "she keeps pretty middlin', I think."

"Let's see—when?" asked Mrs. Morel.

"Well, I shouldn't be surprised any time now."

"Ah! And she's kept fairly?"

"Yes, sily."

"That's a blessing, for she's none too strong."

"No. An' I've done another sily trick."

"What's that?"

Mrs. Morel knew Barker wouldn't do anything very sily.

"I've come be-out de' market-bag."

"You can have mine."

"Nay, you'll be wantin' that yourself."

"I shan't. I take a sily bag always."

She saw the discoloured lads rather haying in the week's groceries and meat on the Friday nights, and she advised him. "Barker's lads, but he's ten times the man you are," she said to her husband.



## STRIKE IN LOVE

Just then Wason entered. He was thin, rather fish-looking, with a boyish impudence and a slightly foolish smile, deeper in his seven children. But his wife was a passionate woman.

"I see you've losted me," he said, smiling rather rapidly.

"Yes," replied Barker.

The newcomer took off his cap and his big woollen muffin. His nose was pinched and red.

"I'm afraid you're cold, Mr. Wason," said Mrs. Moor.

"It's a bit nippy," he replied.

"Then come to the fire."

"Nay, I o'll do where I am."

Both withdrew out away back. They could not be induced to come on to the hearth. The hearth is sacred to the family.

"Go thy ways, o' th' same-things," cried Moor's elderly

"Nay, thank yer, I'm very nicely here."

"You come, of course," insisted Mrs. Moor.

He rose and went reluctantly. He sat in Moor's arm-chair reluctantly. It was too great a familiarity. But the fire made him blashfully happy.

"And how's that chest of yours?" demanded Mrs. Moor.

He smiled again, with his blue eyes rather sunny.

"Oh, it's very middlin'," he said.

"W'e a rattin in it like a kettle-drum," said Barker shortly.

"T-t-t-t!" were Mrs. Moor rapidly with her tongue. "Did you have that flannel singlet made?"

"Not yet," he smiled.

"Then, why didn't you?" she asked.

"I o'll come," he smiled.

"Ah, we' Domet-day!" exclaimed Barker.

Barker and Moor were both impressions of Wason. But, then, they were both as hard as nails, physically.

When Moor was really ready he pushed the bag of money to Paul.

"Count it, boy," he asked humbly.

Paul impatiently snatched from his bosom and pocket, dipped the bag upside down on the table. There was a five-pound bag of silver, sovereigns and loose money. He counted quickly, referred to the checks—the witness papers giving warrant of coin—for the money in order. Then Barker glanced at the checks.

Mrs. Moor went upstairs, and the three men came to table. Moor, as master of the house, sat in his arm-chair, with his back to the hot fire. The two ladies had cooler seats. None of them counted the money.

"What did we say Simpson's was?" asked Moor; and the

laughed, walked for a minute over the dayman's earnings. Then the amount was put aside.

"*As! Bill Maylor's?*"

This money was also taken from the pack.

Then, because Winona lived in one of the company's houses, and he rent had been deducted, Mord and Barker took four-and-six each. And because Mord's coat had come, and the landing was stopped, Barker and Winona took four shillings each. Then it was plain-sailing. Mord gave each of them a six-creps till there were no more six-creps; each half a crown till there were no more half-crowns; each a shilling till there were no more shillings. If there was anything at the end that wouldn't split, Mord took it and used drink.

Then the three men rose and went. Mord scuttled out of the house before his wife came down. She heard the door close, and descended. She looked hastily at the bread in the oven. Then, glancing on the table, she saw her money lying. Paul had been working all the time. But now he felt his pocket counting the week's money, and her week's wage.

"*Trouse!*" went her tongue.

He frowned. He could not work when she was cross. She crossed again.

"*A steady twenty-five shillings!*" she exclaimed. "*How much was the cheque?*"

"*Ten pounds seven,*" said Paul irritably. He dreaded what was coming.

"*And he gives me a wretched twenty-five, at his club this week! But I know him. He thinks because you're earning he needn't keep the house any longer. No, all he has to do with his money is to gamble it. But I'll show him!*"

"*Oh, mother, don't!*" cried Paul.

"*Don't what, I should like to know?*" she exclaimed.

"*Don't carry on again. I can't work.*"

She went very quiet.

"*Yes, it's all very well,*" she said; "*but how do you think I'm going to manage?*"

"*Well, it won't make it any better to whistle about it.*"

"*I should like to know what you'd do if you had it to put up with.*"

"*It won't be long. You can have my money. Let him go to hell.*"

He went back to his work, and she tied her handkerchiefs tightly. When she was forced he could not bear it. But now he began to look on her recognising him.

"The two lions at the top," she said, "will be done in twenty minutes. Don't forget these."

"All right," he answered; and she went to market.

He resumed stone working. But his usual intense concentration became unsettled. His licensed for the physician. At a quarter past seven came a low knock, and Miriam entered.

"All alone?" she asked.

"Yes."

As if at home, she took off her father's slippers and her long coat, hanging them up. It gave him a thrill. This might be their own house, his and hers. Then she came back and peered over his work.

"What is it?" she asked.

"Sill design, for decorating walls, and for embroidery."

She bent straightforwardly over the drawings.

It irritated him that she posed to see everything that was his, smothering him out. He went into the parlour and returned with a bundle of brownish linen. Carefully unrolling it, he spread it on the floor. It proved to be a curtain or porch, beautifully decorated with a design on roses.

"Ah, how beautiful!" she cried.

The spread cloth, with its wonderful reddish rose and dark green stems, all so simple, and somehow so wicked-looking, lay at her feet. She went on her knees before it, her dark curls drooping. He saw her trembled voluptuously before his work, and he knew lost quickly. Suddenly she looked up at him.

"Why does it seem cruel?" she asked.

"What?"

"There seems a feeling of cruelty about it," she said.

"It's jolly good, whether or not," he replied, folding up his work with a lover's haste.

She rose slowly, pondering.

"And what will you do with it?" she asked.

"Send it to Lefevre's. I did it for my mother, but I think she'd rather have the money."

"Yes," said Miriam. He had spoken with a touch of bitterness, and Miriam comprehended. Money would have been nothing to her.

He took the cloth back into the parlour. When he returned, he drew to Miriam a smaller piece. It was a cushion-cover with the same design.

"I did that for you," he said.

She folded the work with trembling hands, and did not speak. He became embarrassed.

"By Jove, she loves it!" he said.

He took the up leaves out, tapped them vigorously. They were

done. He put them on the hearth to cool. Then he went to the scullery, washed his hands, wiped the last white dough out of the parchment, and dropped it in a baking-dish. Miriam was still bent over her painted cloth. He stood rubbing the last of dough from his hands.

"You do him it?" he asked.

She looked up at him, with her dark eyes one flame of love. He laughed unaccountably. Then he began to talk about the dough. There was for him the most intense pleasure in talking about his work to Miriam. All his passion, all his wild blood, went into this intercourse with her, when he talked and recovered his work. She brought back to him his responsibilities. She did not understand, any more than a woman understands when she conceives a child in her womb. But that was life for her and for him.

While they were talking, a young woman of about twenty-two, small and pale, hollow-eyed, yet with a radiant look about her, entered the room. She was a friend of the Moore's.

"Take your dough off," said Paul.

"No, I'm not stopping."

She sat down in the arm-chair opposite Paul and Miriam, who were on the sofa. Miriam moved a little farther from him. The room was hot, with a scent of rose-buds. Brown, crag loaves stood on the hearth.

"I shouldn't have expected to see you here to-night, Miriam Lavers," said Beatrice suddenly.

"Why not?" murmured Miriam hardly.

"Why, let's look at your dough."

Miriam remained unaccountably still.

"If she doesn't see that 'ere," laughed Beatrice.

Miriam put her feet from under her dress. Her boots had that square, iron-shoe, rather patterned look about them, which showed how self-conscious and self-mourning she was. And they were covered with mud.

"Glory! You're a positive mud-bag," exclaimed Beatrice.

"What does your boot?"

"I clean them myself."

"Then you wanted a job," said Beatrice. "It would be' taken a lot of man to be' brought me down here to-night. But how'd you manage, doesn't it, 'Fudge my chink?'"

"Just so," he said.

"Oh, Lord! are you going to sport through languages? What does it mean, Miriam?"

There was a fine sarcasm in the last question, but Miriam did not see it.

"Among other things," I believe," she said hastily.

Beatrice put her tongue between her teeth and laughed wickedly.

"Among other things," "Poodle" repeated. "Do you mean love laughs at weather, and failure, and sorrow, and loneliness and men friends, and holy friends, and even at the beloved himself?"

She offered a great unsuccess.

"In fact, it's one big snarl," he replied.

"Up it's down, 'Poodle'—you believe me," she said; and she went off into another burst of wicked, silent laughter.

Miriam sat silent, withdrawn into herself. Everyone of Paul's friends delighted in taking sides against her, and he left her in the largely-ignored silence to have a sort of savings upon her chest.

"Are you still at school?" asked Miriam of Beatrice.

"Yes."

"You've not had your notes, then?"

"I expect it at Easter."

"Isn't it an awful shame, to turn you off merely because you didn't pass the exam?"

"I don't know," said Beatrice coldly.

"Again—says you're as good as any teacher anywhere. It seems to me ridiculous. I wonder why you didn't pass."

"Short of brains, eh, 'Poodle'?" said Beatrice briefly.

"Only kind of a bit weak," replied Paul, laughing.

"Nonsense!" she cried; and, springing from her seat, she walked and bowed him down. She had beautiful small hands. He held her wrists while she wended with him. As her arms broke free, and moved two handfuls of his thick, dark brown hair, which she shook.

"Dear!" he said, as he pulled her hair straight with his fingers. "I hate you!"

She laughed with gloom.

"Mind!" she said. "I want to be next to you."

"I'd as lief be neighbours with a viper," he said, nevertheless making place for her between him and Miriam.

"Did it ruffle his pretty hair, then?" she cried; and, with her back-curl, she combed him straight. "And his nice little moustache!" she exclaimed. She tilted her head back and combed his young moustache. "It's a wicked moustache, 'Poodle,'" she said. "It's a red for danger. Have you got any of those cigarettes?"

He pulled his cigarette-case from his pocket. Beatrice looked inside it.

"And happy me having Conrad's last cigarette," said Beatrice, putting the thing between her teeth. He held a lit match to her, and she pulled delicately.

"Thanks so much, darling," she said mockingly.

It gave her a wicked delight.

"Don't you think he does it nicely, Miriam?" she asked.

"Oh, very!" said Miriam.

He took a cigarette for himself.

"Look, old boy!" said Beatrice, tilting her cigarette at him.

He bent forward to her to light his cigarette at hers. She was wishing at first to let him do so. Miriam saw his eyes trembling with mischief, and his full, almost sensual, mouth quivering. He was not himself, and she could not bear it. As he was now, she had no connection with him; she might as well not have looked. She saw the cigarette dancing on his full red lips. She kissed his thick hair for being rumbled loose on his forehead.

"Sweet boy!" said Beatrice, tipping up his chin and giving him a little kiss on the cheek.

"I'll kiss thee back, Son," he said.

"The what?" she giggled, jumping up and going away.

"Isn't he charming, Miriam?"

"Quite," said Miriam. "By the way, aren't you forgetting the bread?"

"By Jove!" he cried, flinging open the oven-door.

Out puffed the black smoke and a smell of burned bread.

"Oh, golly!" cried Beatrice, coming to his side. He crouched before the oven, she peered over his shoulder. "That's what comes of the oblivion of love, my boy."

Paul was rashly removing the loaves. One was burnt black on the hot side; another was hard as a brick.

"Four more!" said Paul.

"You want to grate it," said Beatrice. "Fetch me the nutmeg-grater."

She arranged the bread in the oven. He brought the grater, and she grated the bread on to a newspaper on the table. He set the door open to blow away the smell of burned bread. Beatrice grated away, puffing her cigarette, knocking the dusts off the poor loaf.

"My word, Miriam! you've to be it this time," said Beatrice.

"It!" exclaimed Miriam in amazement.

"You'd better be gone when his mother comes in. I know why King Alfred burned the cakes. Now I see it! Poole would fix up a tale about his work making him forget, if he thought it would work. If that old woman had come in a few moments, she'd have found the loaves thing's start who made the oblivion, instead of poor Alfred."

She giggled as she scraped the loaf. Even Miriam laughed in spite of herself. Paul nodded the fact rashly.

The garden-gate was heard to bang.

"Quick!" cried Beatrice, giving Paul the striped loaf. "Wrap it up as a damp towel."

Paul disappeared into the gallery. Beatrice hastily blew her wrappings into the fire, and sat down immediately. Anne came bustling in. She was as abrupt, quite smart young woman. She glided in the wrong light.

"Smell of burning?" she exclaimed.

"It's the cigarettes," replied Beatrice demurely.

"Where's Paul?"

Leonard had followed Anne. He had a long comic face and blue eyes, very red.

"I suppose he's left you to smile it between you," he said. He nodded sympathetically to Miriam, and became greatly sarcastic to Beatrice.

"No," said Beatrice. "he's gone off with another man."

"I just met number five acquiring for him," said Leonard.

"Yes—we're going to share him up like Solomon's baby," said Beatrice.

Annie laughed.

"Oh, ay," said Leonard. "And which he should you have?"

"I don't know," said Beatrice. "I'll let all the newspapers first."

"As? you'd have the savings, like?" said Leonard, bustling up a comic face.

Annie was looking in the oven. Miriam sat ignored. Paul stared.

"This bread's a fine sight, our Paul," said Annie.

"Then you should stop an' look after it," said Paul.

"You mean you should do what you're reckoning to do," replied Annie.

"He should, shouldn't he?" cried Beatrice.

"I'd think he'd got plenty on hand," said Leonard.

"You had a merry walk, didn't you, Miriam?" said Annie.

"Yes—but I'd hate to all week—"

"And you wanted a bit of a change, like," interrupted Leonard kindly.

"Well you can't be stuck in the house for ever," Annie agreed. She was quite amiable. Beatrice pulled on her coat, and went out with Leonard and Annie. She would never see her boy.

"Don't forget that bread, our Paul," cried Annie. "Good night, Miriam. I don't think it will rain."

When they had all gone, Paul fetched the striped loaf, unwrapped it, and surveyed it sadly.

"It's a mess!" he said.

"But," answered Miriam impatiently, "what is it after all—necessity or jealousy?"

"Yes, but—not the master's perfidious baking, and she'll take it to heart. However, it's no good leathering."

He took the loaf back into the scullery. There was a little distance between him and Miriam. He stood balanced opposite her for some moments considering, thinking of his behaviour with Beatrice. He felt guilty towards himself, and yet glad. For some unreasonable reason it served Miriam right. He was not going to repent. She wondered what he was thinking of as he stood suspended. His thick hair was tumbled over his forehead. Why might she not push it back for him, and remove the marks of Beatrice's comb? Why might she not press his body with her two hands. It looked so firm, and every white living. And he would let other girls, why not her?

Suddenly he started into life. It made her quiver almost with terror as he quickly pushed the hair off his forehead and came towards her.

"Half-past eight!" he said. "We'd better buck up. What's your French?"

Miriam slowly and rather listlessly produced her exercise-book. Every week she wrote for him a sort of diary of her inner life, in her own French. He had found that was the only way to get her to do compositions. And her diary was mostly a love-letter. He would read it now; she felt as if her soul's history were going to be dissected by him in his present mood. He sat beside her. She watched his hand, firm and warm, vigorously scoring her work. He was reading only the French, ignoring her soul that was there. But gradually his hand forgot its work. He read no longer, motionless. She quivered.

"*'Ce matin les oiseaux m'ont éveillé,'*" he read. "*'Il faisait encore un crispacule. Mais les petits oiseaux de ma chambre deais Mingo, et puis, j'ai vu, et tous les oiseaux du bon édifice dans un chameau et et roulement. Tous l'air les travaillent. J'étais sûr de vous. Et ce que vous voyez aussi l'air.' Les oiseaux m'ont éveillé presque tous les matins, et toujours il y a quelques choses de travail dans le ciel des gens. Il est si clair—'*"

Miriam sat tremulous, half-astounded. He remained quite still, trying to understand. He only knew she loved him. He was afraid of her love for him. It was too good for him, and he was inadequate. His own love was at fault, not hers. Astounded, he corrected her work, humbly writing above her words.

"Look," he said quietly, "the past participle conjugated with *être* agrees with the direct object when it precedes."



She bent forward, trying to see and to understand. Her face, her curls tickled his face. He started as if they had been red hot, shuddering. His nose was pressing forward at the page, her red lips pressed pitiously, the black hair springing as fine worms across her tawny, ruddy, cheek. She was coloured like a pomegranate for richness. His breath came short as he watched her. Suddenly she looked up at him. His dark eyes were mixed with their love, afraid, and yearning. His eyes, too, were dark, and they burnt her. They seemed to madden her. She lost all her self-control, was exposed as fear. And he knew, before he could kiss her, he must drive something out of himself. And a touch of hate for her crept back again into his heart. He returned to her mistress.

Suddenly he flung down the pencil, and was at the oven in a leap, turning the bread. For Marian he was too quick. She stared violently, and it hurt her with real pain. Even the way he creptched before the oven hurt her. There seemed to be something cruel in it, something cruel in the swift way he picked the bread out of the tin, caught it up again. Hardly he had been gentle in his movements she would have felt it rich and warm. As it was, she was hurt.

He returned and finished the evening.

"You've done well this week," he said.

She saw he was flattered by her diary. It did not repay her entirely.

"You really do blossom out sometimes," he said. "You ought to write poetry."

She lifted her head with joy, then she shook it maternally.

"I don't trust myself," she said.

"You should try!"

Again she shook her head.

"Shall we read, or is it too late?" he asked.

"It is late—but we can read just a little," she pleaded.

She was really getting now the food for her life during the next week. He made her copy Ruskin's *La Botte*. Then he read it for her. His voice was soft and earnest, but growing almost hoarse. He had a way of lifting his lips and showing his teeth, passionately and bitterly, when he was much moved. This he did now. It made Marian feel as if he were wringing on her. She dared not look at him, but sat with her head bowed. She could not understand why he got into such a tumult and fury. It made her wretched. She did not like Ruskin, on the whole—and Virginia.

"Behold her singing in the field  
Yon solitary highland lass."

That nourished her breast. So did "Pale Isen". And—

"It was a beautiful evening, calm and pure,  
And breathing holy quiet like a man."

There was like himself. And there was he, saying in his throat  
silently

"Du te supposes la belle des croisés."

The poem was finished; he took the book out of the oven, arranging the burnt leaves at the bottom of the parchment, the good ones at the top. The discoloured leaf remained/ remained up in the scullery.

"Marian needn't know all morning," he said. "It wasn't upset her so much then as at night."

Marian looked in the bookcase, saw what postcards and letters he had reserved, saw what books were there. She took one that had interested him. Then he turned down the gas and they set off. He did not trouble to lock the door.

He was not home again until a quarter to eleven. His mother was seated in the rocking-chair. Annie, with a rope of hair hanging down her back, remained sitting on a low stool before the fire, her elbows on her knees, gloomily. On the table stood the offending leaf unwrapped. Paul moved rather breathless. No smokepipe. His mother was reading the little local newspaper. He took off his coat, and went to sit down on the sofa. His mother moved easily aside to let him pass. No one spoke. He was very uncomfortable. For some minutes he sat pretending to read a piece of paper he found on the table. Then—

"I forgot that book, mother," he said.

There was no answer from either woman.

"Walk," he said, "it's only two-pence bus/penny. I can pay you for that."

Being angry he put three pence on the table, and slid them towards his mother. She turned away her head. Her mouth was shut tightly.

"Yes," said Annie, "you don't know how badly my mother is!"  
The girl sat staring glumly into the fire.

"Why is she badly?" asked Paul, in his overbearing way.

"Well?" said Annie. "She could scarcely get home!"

He looked sharply at his mother. She looked ill.

"Why could you scarcely get home?" he asked her, still sharply. She would not answer.

"I found her as white as a sheet sitting here," said Annie, with a suggestion of tears in her voice.

"Well, *why?*" insisted Paul. His brows were knitting, his eyes flashing passionately.

"It was enough to upset anybody," said Mrs. Marel, "hogging down garrets—corn, and green-peas, and a pair of curtains—"

"Well, why did you hang about; you needn't have done."

"That's who would?"

"Let Annie fetch the meat."

"Yes, and I would fetch the meat, but how was I to know. You went off with Miriam, instead of being in when my mother came."

"And what was that matter with you?" asked Paul of his mother.

"I suppose it's my heart," she replied. Certainly she looked bluish round the mouth.

"And have you hit it before?"

"Yes—often enough."

"Then why haven't you told me?—and why haven't you seen a doctor?"

Mrs. Marel shifted in her chair, angry with him for his questioning.

"You'd never notice anything," said Annie. "You'd too eager to be off with Miriam."

"Oh, um I—was any worse than you with Leonard?"

"I was in at a quarter to ten."

There was silence in the room for a time.

"I should have thought," said Mrs. Marel bitterly, "that she wouldn't have occupied you so entirely as to burn a whole evening off bread."

"Business was here as well as she."

"Very likely. But we know why the hotel is spoiled."

"Why?" he flushed.

"Because you were engrossed with Miriam," replied Mrs. Marel hotly.

"Oh, very well—there it was not!" he replied angrily.

He was discomfited and wretched. Seizing a paper, he began to read. Annie, her brows unfurrowed, her long nose of her bent into a pipe, went up to bed, tucking her a very quiet good-night.

Paul sat poring over his read. He knew his mother wanted to upbraid him. He also wanted to know what had made her ill, for he was troubled. So, instead of retiring away to bed, as he would have liked to do, he sat and waited. There was a time silence. The clock ticked loudly.

"You'd better go to bed before your father comes in," said the mother harshly. "And if you're going to leave anything to me, you'd better get it."

"I don't want anything."

It was his mother's custom to bring him some trifle for supper on Friday night, the night of luxury for the colliers. He was too angry to go and find it in the pantry that night. This vexed her.

"If I wanted you to go to Betty on Friday night, I can imagine the answer," said Mrs. Morel. "But you're never too tired to go if *she* will come for you. Nay, you neither want to eat nor drink then."

"I can't let her go alone."

"Can't you? And why does she come?"

"Not because I ask her."

"She doesn't come without you want her——"

"Well, what if I do want her——" he replied.

"Why, nothing, if it was sensible or reasonable. But to go tramping up there miles and miles in the mud, coming home at midnight, and yet to go to Nottingham on the morning——"

"If I didn't, you'd be just the same."

"Yes, I should, because there's no sense in it. Is she so fascinating that you must follow her all that way?" Mrs. Morel was bitterly sarcastic. She sat still, with averted face, working with a rhythmic, jerked movement, the black corners of her apron. It was a movement that hurt Paul to see.

"I do like her," he said, "but——"

"Like her?" said Mrs. Morel, in the same biting tone. "It seems to me you like nothing and nobody else. There's neither Anne, nor me, nor anyone else for you."

"What nonsense, mother—you know I don't love her—I—I tell you I don't love her—she doesn't even walk with my arm, because I don't want her so."

"Then why do you fly to her so often?"

"I do like to talk to her—I never said I didn't. But I don't love her."

"Is there nobody else to talk to?"

"Not about the things we talk of. There's lots of things that you're not interested in, that——"

"What things?"

Mrs. Morel was so insistent that Paul began to pant.

"Why—poems—and books. You don't care about Herbert Spencer."

"No," was the sad reply. "And you won't at my age."

"Well, but I do now—and I mean deep——"

"And how do you know," Mrs. Morel flamed defiantly, "that I shouldn't. Do you ever try me?"

"But you don't, mother, you know you don't care whether a picture's decorative or not; you don't care what colour it is in."

"How do you know I don't care? Do you ever try and? Do you ever talk to me about these things, to try?"

"But it's not that that matters to you, mother, you know it's not."

"What is it, then—what is it, then, that matters to me?" she flushed. He lowered his brows with pain.

"You're old, mother, and we're young."

He only meant that the seasons of her age were not the seasons of his. But he realized the moment he had spoken that he had said the wrong thing.

"Yes, I know it well—I am old. And therefore I may stand aside, I have nothing more to do with you. You only want me to stay on your side now as for Miriam."

He could not bear it. Instinctively he realized that he was left to her. And after all, she was the chief thing to him, the only supreme thing.

"You know it isn't, mother, you know it isn't."

She was moved to pity by his cry.

"It looks a great deal like it," she said, half putting aside her despair.

"The mother—I really don't love her. I talk to her, but I want to come home to you."

He had taken off her collar and tie, and now, bare-throated, to go to bed. As he stooped to kiss his mother, she threw her arms round his neck, hid her face on his shoulder, and cried, in a whispering voice, so unlike her own that he winced in agony:

"I can't bear it. I could let another woman—but not her. She'd leave me no room, not a bit of room——"

And immediately he hated Miriam bitterly.

"And I've never—you know, Paul—I've never had a husband—not really——"

He stroked his mother's hair, and his mouth was on her throat.

"And she looks so in talking to you from me—she's not like ordinary girls."

"Well, I don't love her, mother," he murmured, bowing his head and hiding his eyes on her shoulder in misery. His mother kissed him a long, fervent kiss.

"My boy!" she said, in a voice trembling with passionate love.

Without knowing, he gently stroked her hair.

"There," said his mother, "now go to bed. You'll be as tired in the morning." As she was speaking she heard her husband coming. "There's your father—now go." Suddenly she looked at him, almost as if in fear. "Perhaps I'm selfish. If you want her, take her, my boy."

His mother looked so strange, Paul kissed her, trembling.

"Ha—mother!" he said softly.

Moor came in, walking unweary. His hat was over one corner of his eye. He balanced in the doorway.

"At your service again?" he said vigorously.

Mrs. Moor's emotion turned into sudden hate of the drinkard who had come to lean upon her.

"At my rate, it is rather," she said.

"H'm—h'm! h'm—h'm!" he mused. He went into the passage, hung up his hat and coat. Then they heard him go down three steps to the pantry. He returned with a piece of pork-pie in his fist. It was what Mrs. Moor had bought for her son.

"Here was that bought for you. If you can give me no more than twenty-five shillings, I'm sure I'm not going to buy you pork-pie to stuff, after you've swilled a bellyful of beer."

"What—what—what?" stammered Moor, tottering in his balance. "What—what—what?" He looked at the piece of meat and crust, and suddenly, in a violent spasm of temper, threw it into the fire.

Paul started to his feet.

"Where your own stuff?" he cried.

"What—what?" suddenly shouted Moor, jumping up and clenching his fist. "I'll show you, you young jockey!"

"All right!" said Paul viciously, putting his head on one side. "Show me!"

He would at that moment dearly have loved to have a smack at something. Moor was half crouching, flat up, ready to spring. The young man stood, smiling with his lips.

"Dad!" Moor did nothing, swinging round with a great stroke just past his son's face. He dared not, even though so close, really touch the young man, but reserved an inch away.

"Right!" said Paul, his eyes upon the side of his father's mouth, whom in another instant he did would have hit. He waited for that stroke. But he heard a faint moan from behind. His mother was doubly pale, and dark as the mouth. Moor was dashing up to deliver another blow.

"Father!" said Paul, so that the word rang.

Moor started, and stood at attention.

"Mother!" muttered the boy. "Mother!"

She began to struggle with herself. Her open eyes watched him, although she could not move. Gradually she was coming to herself. He hit her down on the sofa, and ran upstairs for a little whisky, which at last she could up. The tears were hopping down his face. As he knelt in front of her he did not cry, but the tears ran down his face quickly. Moor, on the opposite side of the room, sat with elbows on his knees glaring across.

"What's a matter with 'em?" he asked.

"Fume!" replied Paul.

"H'm!"

The elderly man began to undress his boots. He stumbled off to bed. His last sight was caught in that house.

Paul hovered there, stroking his mother's head.

"Don't be poorly, mother--don't be poorly!" he said time after time.

"It's nothing, my boy," she murmured.

At last he rose, dashed in a large piece of coal, and raised the fire. Then he cleared the room, put everything straight, laid the things for breakfast, and brought his mother's candle.

"Can you go to bed, mother?"

"Yes, I'll rest."

"Sleep with Auntie, mother, not with him."

"No. I'll sleep in my own bed."

"Don't sleep with him, mother."

"I'll sleep in my own bed."

She rose, and he turned out the gas, then followed her closely upstairs, carrying her candle. On the landing he kissed her close.

"Good-night, mother."

"Good-night!" she said.

He pressed his face upon the pillow in a fury of misery. And yet, somewhere in his soul, he was at peace because he still loved his mother best. It was the bitter peace of resignation.

The efforts of his father to conciliate him next day were a great humiliation to him.

Everybody tried to forget the scene.

*Defect of Miriam*

Paul was dissatisfied with himself and with everything. The dearest of his love belonged to his mother. When he felt he had hurt her, or wounded her love for her, he could not bear it. Now it was spring, and there was battle between him and Miriam. This year he had a good deal against her. She was vaguely aware of it. The old feeling that she was to be a sacrifice to his love, which she had had when she prayed, was mingled in all her emotions. She did not at the bottom believe she ever would have him. She did not believe in herself practically: doubted whether she could ever be what he would demand of her. Certainly she never saw herself living happily through a lifetime with him. She saw tragedy, sorrow, and sacrifice ahead. And in sorrow she was proud, in resignation she was strong, for she did not trust herself to support everyday life. She was prepared for the big things and the deep things, like tragedy. It was the sufficiency of the small day-life she could not trust.

The Easter holidays began happily. Paul was his own truck self. Yet she felt it would go wrong. On the Sunday afternoon she stood at her bedroom window, looking across at the oak-tree of the wood, in whose branches a twilight was tangled, below the bright sky of the afternoon. Grey-green remnants of honey-suckle leaves hung below the window, some already, she felt sure, shivering fast. It was spring, which she loved and dreaded.

Hearing the click of the gate she stood in suspense. It was a bright grey day. Paul came into the yard with his bicycle, which glimmered as he walked. Usually he rang his bell and laughed towards the house. To-day he walked with shut lips and cold, cruel bearing, that had something of a slouch and a sneer in it. She knew him well by now, and could tell from that legs-looking, stoof young body of his what was happening inside him. There was a cold awareness in the way he put his bicycle in its place, that made her heart sick.

She came downstairs nervously. She was wearing a new net blouse that she thought became her. It had a high collar with a tiny veil, reminding her of Mary, Queen of Scots, and making her, she thought, look wonderfully a woman, and dignified. At twenty



she was full-breasted and luxuriously formed. Her face was still like a soft rich mask, unchangeable. But her eyes, once lifted, were wonderful. She was afraid of him. He would notice her new blouse.

He, being in a hard, unusual mood, was entertaining the family on a description of a service given on the Princeton Methodist Chapel, conducted by one of the well-known preachers of the sect. He sat at the head of the table, his outside face, with the eyes that could be so beautiful, shining with tenderness or dancing with laughter, now taking on one expression and then another, in imitation of various people he was meeting. His mockery always hurt her, it was too near the reality. He was too clever and cruel. She felt that when his eyes were like this, hard with mocking face, he would spare neither himself nor anybody else. But Mrs. Leivers was wiping her eyes with laughter, and Mr. Leivers, just awake from his Sunday nap, was rubbing his head in amusement. The three brothers sat with ruffled, sleepy appearance in their shirt-sleeves, giving a guffaw from time to time. The whole family loved a "take-off" more than anything.

He took no notice of Miriam. Later, she saw him remark her new blouse, saw that the artist approved, but it was from him not a spark of warmth. She was nervous, could hardly reach the message from the shelves.

When the men went out to milk, she ventured to address him personally.

"You were late," she said.

"Was I?" he answered.

There was silence for a while.

"Was it rough riding?" she asked.

"I didn't notice it."

She continued quickly to lay the table. When she had finished—

"You won't be long a few minutes. Will you come and look at the daffodils?" she said.

He rose without answering. They went out from the back garden under the budding damson-trees. The hills and the sky were clear and cold. Everything looked washed, rather hard. Miriam glanced at Paul. He was pale and impassive. It seemed cruel to her that his eyes and brows, which she loved, could look so hurting.

"Has the wind made you ill?" she asked. She detected an underneath feeling of wariness about him.

"No, I think not," he answered.

"It must be rough on the road—the wind proves so."

"You can see by the clouds it's a south-west wind, that helps me here."

"You see, I don't cycle, so I don't understand," she murmured.

"Is there need to cycle to know that?" he said.

She thought his sarcasms were unnecessary. They went forward in silence. Round the wall, heavily liven at the back of the house was a stone ledge, under which daffodils were crawling forward from among their sheaves of green-gold blades. The cheeks of the flowers were pinched with cold. But still some had burst, and their gold ruffled and glowed. Miriam went on her knees before one cluster, took a wild-looking daffodil between her hands, turned up its face of gold to her, and bowed down, warming it with her breath and cheeks and brow. He stood aside, with his hands in his pockets, watching her. One after another she turned up to him the faces of the yellow, lustrous flowers appealingly, handling them lovingly all the while.

"Aren't they magnificent?" she murmured.

"Magnificent! It's a bit stark—they're pretty!"

She bowed again to her flowers as his censure of her praise. He watched her crouching, tipping the flowers with fisted knees.

"Why must you always be fondling things?" he said irritably.

"But I love to touch them," she replied, hurt.

"Can you never like things without clutching them as if you wanted to pull the heart out of them? Why don't you have a bit more restraint, or reserve, or something?"

She looked up at him full of pain, then continued slowly to stroke her lips against a ruffled flower. Their scent, as she smelled it, was so much kinder than his; it almost made her cry.

"You wrangle the soul out of things," he said. "I would never wrangle—at any rate, I'd go straight."

He scarcely knew what he was saying. Those things came from him mechanically. She looked at him. His body seemed one weapon, firm and hard against her.

"You're always begging things to love you," he said, "as if you were a beggar for love. Even the flowers, you have to fawn on them—"

Rhythmically, Miriam was wrapping and unwrapping the flower with her mouth, inhaling the scent which ever after made her shudder as it came to her nostrils.

"You don't want to love—your eternal and abnormal craving is to be loved. You aren't positive, you're negative. You stoop, stoop, as if you must fill yourself up with love, because you've got a shortage somewhere."

She was stunned by his cruelty, and did not hear. He had not the faintest notion of what he was saying. It was as if his furrowed, tortured soul, run hot by thwarted passion, jotted off these sayings:

She sprang from electricity. She did not grasp anything he said, she only sat uncouched beneath his cruelty and his hatred of her. She never resisted in a fight. Over everything she brooded and brooded.

After tea he stayed with Edgar and the brothers, taking no notice of Miriam. She, extremely unhappy on this look-alike holiday, waited for him. And at last he yielded and came to her. She was determined to teach the model of her to its origin. She expected it not much more than a word.

"Shall we go through the word a little way?" she asked him, knowing he never refused a direct request.

They went down to the warren. On the middle path they passed a trap, a narrow horseshoe hedge of small fir-boughs, baited with the guts of a rabbit. Paul glanced at it frowning. She caught his eye.

"Isn't it dreadful?" she asked.

"I don't know." Is it worse than a wheel with its teeth in a rabbit's throat? One wheel or many rabbits? One or the other must go!"

He was taking the bitterness of life badly. She was rather sorry for him.

"We will go back to the house," he said. "I don't want to walk out."

They went past the lilac-tree, whose brown leaf-buds were setting underneath. Just a fragment remained of the haystack, a monument squared and brown, like a pillar of stone. There was a little bed of hay from the last cutting.

"Let us sit here a minute," said Miriam.

He sat down against his will, resting his back against the hard wall of hay. They faced the amphitheatre of round hills that glowed with sunset, tiny white firs standing out, the meadows golden, the woods dark and yet luminous, tree-tops folded over one-tops, darkest in the distance. The evening had cleared, and the sun was tender with a sanguine flush under which the land lay still and cold.

"Isn't it beautiful?" she pleaded.

But he only smiled. He would rather have had it ugly just then.

At that moment a big bull-terrier came striding up, open-mouthed, pranced his two paws on the youth's shoulders, licking his face. Paul drew back, laughing. Bull was a great relief to him. He pushed the dog aside, but it came leaping back.

"Get out," said the lad, "or I'll do that cat."

But the dog was not to be pushed away. So Paul had a little

leaps with the creature, pushing poor Bill away from him, who, however, only floundered shamelessly back again, wild with joy. The two fought together, the man laughing good-naturedly, the dog growling all over. Miriam watched them. There was something pathetic about the man. He wanted so badly to love, to be understood. The rough way he bowled the dog over was really loving. Bill got up, jumping with happiness, his brown eyes rolling at his white face, and lumbered back again. He adored Paul. The lad frowned.

"Bill, I've had enough of that," he said.

But the dog only stood with two heavy paws, that quivered with love, upon his thighs, and flickered a red tongue at him. He drew back.

"No," he said—"no—I've had enough."

And in a minute the dog trotted off happily, to vary the fun.

He remained staring miserably across at the hills, whose still beauty he begrudged. He wanted to go and cycle with Edgar. Yet he had not the courage to leave Miriam.

"Why are you sad?" she asked humbly.

"I'm not sad; why should I be," he answered. "I'm only normal."

She wondered why he always claimed to be normal when he was disagreeable.

"But what is the matter?" she pleaded, coaxing him soothingly.

"Nothing!"

"Nay!" she murmured.

He picked up a stick and began to walk the earth with it.

"You'd be better not talk," he said.

"But I want to know——" she replied.

He laughed unaccountably.

"You always do," he said.

"It's not fair to you," she murmured.

He thrust, thrust, thrust at the ground with the pointed stick, digging up little clods of earth as if he were in a fever of irritation. She gently and firmly laid her hand on his wrist.

"Don't!" she said. "Put it away."

He flung the stick into the currant-bushes, and leaned back. Now he was bowed up.

"What is it?" she pleaded softly.

He lay perfectly still, only his eyes alive, and they full of torment.

"You know," he said at length, rather wearily—"you know—we'd better break off."

It was what she decided. Softly everything seemed to darken before her eyes.

"What?" she murmured, "What has happened?"

"Nothing has happened. We only realize whom we are. It's no good——"

She waited in silence, sadly, painfully. It was no good being impatient with him. At any rate, he would tell her now what ailed him.

"We agreed on friendship," he went on in a dull, monotonous voice. "How often have we agreed for friendship? And yet—it never crops there, nor goes anywhere else."

He was silent again. She brooded. What did he mean? He was so wearying. There was something he would not yield. Yet she must be patient with him.

"I can only give friendship—it's all I'm capable of—it's a flaw in my make-up. The thing overbalances to one side—I have a crippling balance. Let us have done."

There was warmth of fury in his last phrase. He meant she loved him more than he her. Perhaps he could not love her. Perhaps she had not in herself that which he wanted. It was the deepest motive of her soul, this self-interest. It was so deep she dared neither realize nor acknowledge it. Perhaps she was deficient. Like an infinitely subtle shame, it kept her always back. If it were so, she would do without him. She would never let herself want him. She would merely see.

"But what has happened?" she said.

"Nothing—it's all in myself—it only comes out just now. We're always like this towards Easter-time."

He grovelled so helplessly, she pitied him. At least she never floundered in such a pitiable way. After all, it was he who was chiefly humiliated.

"What do you want?" she asked him.

"Why—I can't come often—that's all. Why should I monopolize you when I'm not—— You see, I'm deficient in something with regard to you——"

He was telling her he did not love her, and so ought to leave her a chance with another man. How foolish and blind and shamefully clumsy he was! What were other men to her? What were men to her at all? But he, she loved his soul. Was he deficient in something? Perhaps he was.

"But I don't understand," she said huskily. "Yesterday——"

The night was turning jangled and huddled to him as the twilight faded. And she bowed under her suffering.

"I know," he cried, "you never will! You'll never believe that I can't—can't physically, any more than I can fly up like a ship-  
hark——"

"What?" she murmured. Now she decided.

"Love you."

He hated her bitterly at that moment because he made her suffer. Love her! She knew he loved her. He really belonged to her. This alone not loving her, physically, bodily, was a mere personality on his part, because he knew she loved him. He was wrapped like a child. He belonged to her. His soul wanted her. She guessed somehow he had been influencing her. She felt upon him the hardness, the foreignness of another influence.

"What have they been saying at home?" she asked.

"It's not that," he answered.

And then she knew it was. She despised them for their commonness, for people. They did not know what things were really worth.

He and she talked very little more that night. After all he left her to cycle with Edgar.

He had come back to his mother. There was the strongest tie in his life. When he thought round, Miriam shrank away. There was a vague, unreal feel about her. And nobody else mattered. There was one place in the world that stood solid and did not melt into generalities: the place where his mother was. Everybody else could grow shadowy, almost non-existent to him, but she could not. It was as if the pivot and pole of his life, from which he could not escape, was his mother.

And in the same way she waited for him. In him was established her life now. After all, the life beyond offered very little to Mrs. Morel. She saw that our chance for doing is here, and doing remained with her. Paul was going to prove that she had been right; he was going to make a man whom nothing should shaft off his feet; he was going to alter the face of the earth in some way which mattered. Wherever he went she felt her soul went with him. Wherever he did she felt her soul stood by him, ready, as it were, to hand him his soul. She could not leave it when he was with Miriam. William was dead. She would fight to keep Paul.

And he came back to her. And in his soul was a feeling of the satisfaction of misfortune because he was faithful to her. She loved him first; he loved her first. And yet it was not enough. His new young life, so strong and imperious, was urged towards something else. It made him mad with indignation. She saw that, and wished bitterly that Miriam had been a woman who could take this new life of his, and leave her the roots. His struggle against his mother almost as he fought against Miriam.

It was a week before he went again to Willey Farm. Miriam had suffered a great deal, and was afraid to see him again. Was she now to endure the agony of his abandoning her? Then

would only be superficial and temporary. He would come back. She told the boys to kiss her. But meanwhile, how far would torture her with his battle against her. She struck down it.

However, the Sunday after Easter he came to tea. Mrs. Levens was glad to see him. She gathered something was troubling him, that he found things hard. He seemed to drift to her for comfort. And she was good to him. She did him that great kindness of treating him almost with reverence.

He met her with the young children in the front garden.

"I'm glad you've come," said the mother, looking at him with her great appealing brown eyes. "It is such a sunny day. I was just going down the fields for the first time this year."

He felt she would like him to come. That comforted him. They went, talking simply, he gently and humbly. He could have wept with gratitude that she was delectable to him. He was feeling humiliated.

At the bottom of the New Close they found a thrush's nest.

"Shall I show you the eggs?" he said.

"Do!" replied Mrs. Levens. "They seem such a sign of spring, and so hopeful."

He put aside the thorns, and took out the eggs, holding them in the palm of his hand.

"They are quite hot—I think we frightened her off them," he said.

"Ay, poor thing!" said Mrs. Levens.

Miriam could not help reaching the eggs, and his hand which, as turned to her, credited them to well.

"Isn't it a strange woman!" she murmured, to get over him.

"Good heart," he answered.

She watched him putting them back, his body pressed against the hedge, his arm reaching slowly through the thorns, his hand folded carefully over the eggs. He was concentrated on the act. Seeing him so, she loved him; he seemed so simple and sufficient to himself. And she could not get to him.

After tea she stood listening at the backdoor. He said *Tessie & Tessie*. Again they sat on the bank of hay at the foot of the stack. He read a couple of pages, but without any heart for it. Again the dog came rising up to repeat the tale of the other day. He showed his mouth to the man's shoes. Paul fingered his ear for a moment. Then he pushed him away.

"Go away, Bill," he said. "I don't want you."

Bill shook off, and Miriam wondered and dreaded what was coming. There was a silence about the people that made her still

with apprehension. It was not his father, but his quiet resolution that she feared.

Turning his face a little to one side, so that she could not see him, he began, speaking slowly and painfully:

"Do you think—if I didn't come up so much—you might get to like somebody else—another man?"

So this was what he was still harping on.

"But I don't know any other man. Why do you ask?" she replied, in a few words that should have been a reproach to him.

"Why," he blurted, "because they say I've no right to come up like this—without we mean to marry——"

Miriam was reluctant at anybody's lifting the issue between them. She had been furious with her own father for suggesting to Paul, laughingly, that he leave why he came so much.

"Who says?" she asked, wondering if her people had anything to do with it. They had not.

"Mother—and the others. They say at the rate everybody will consider me engaged, and I ought to consider myself so, because it's not fair to you. And I've tried to find out—and I don't think I love you as a man ought to love his wife. What do you think about it?"

Miriam bowed her head slowly. She was angry at having this struggle. People should leave him and her alone.

"I don't know," she murmured.

"Do you think we love each other enough to marry?" he asked definitely. It made her tremble.

"No," she answered truthfully. "I don't think so—we're too young."

"I thought perhaps," he went on miserably, "that you, with your intensity in things, might have given me more—than I could ever make up to you. And even now—if you think it better—we'll be engaged."

Now Miriam wanted to cry. And she was angry too. He was playing with a child for people to do as they liked with.

"No, I don't think so," she said firmly.

He pondered a minute.

"You see," he said, "with me—I don't think one person would ever manage to me—be everything to me—I think never."

Then she did not consider.

"No," she murmured. Then, after a pause, she looked at him, and her dark eyes flared.

"This is your mother," she said. "I know she never liked me."

"No, no, it isn't," he said hoarsely. "It was for your sake she spoke this time. She only said, if I was going on, I ought to con-



after myself engaged." There was a silence. "And if I ask you to come down my lane, you won't stop away, will you?"

She did not answer. By this time she was very angry.

"Well, what shall we do?" she said shortly. "I suppose I'd better drop French. I was just beginning to get on with it. But I suppose I can go on alone."

"I don't see that we need," he said. "I can give you a French lesson, surely."

"Well—and there are Sunday nights. I don't stop coming to chapel, because I enjoy it, and it's all the social life I get. But you'd do need to come here with me. I can go alone."

"All right," he answered, rather taken aback. "But if I ask Edgar, he'll always come with us, and then they can say nothing."

There was silence. After all, then, she would not lose much. For all that talk down at his house there would not be much difference. She wished they would mind their own business.

"And you won't think about it, and he'll trouble you, will you?" he asked.

"Oh no," replied Miriam, without looking at him.

He was silent. She thought him unstable. He had no story of purpose, no shadow of righteousness that held him.

"Because," he continued, "a man gets across his bicycle—and goes to work—and does all sorts of things. But a woman broods."

"No, I don't brood," said Miriam. And she meant it.

It had gone rather chilly. They went indoors.

"How warm Paul looks!" Mrs. Levens exclaimed. "Miriam, you shouldn't have let him go out of doors. Do you think you've taken cold, Paul?"

"Oh, no!" he laughed.

But he felt done up. In mere him out, the conflict is himself. Miriam plied him now. But quite early, before nine o'clock, he ran to go.

"You're not going home, are you?" asked Mrs. Levens anxiously.

"Yes," he replied. "I said I'd be early." He was very awkward.

"But that is early," said Mrs. Levens.

Miriam sat in the rocking-chair, and did not speak. He hovered, expecting her to rise and go with him to the barn as usual for his bicycle. She remained as she was. He was at a loss.

"Well—good-night all!" he faltered.

She spoke her good-night along with all the others. But as he went past the window he looked in. She saw him pale, his brow knit slightly in a way that had become constant with her, his eyes dark with pain.

She rose and went to the doorway to wave good-bye to him as he passed through the gate. He rode slowly under the pine trees, feeling a car and a miserable wreck. The hayrds went drifting down the hills at random. He thought it would be a relief to break one's neck.

Two days later he sent her up a book and a little note, urging her to read and be busy.

At the time he gave all his thoughts to Edgar. He loved the family so much, he loved the farm so much; it was the dearest place on earth to him. His home was not so lovable. It was his mother. But then he would have been just as happy with his mother anywhere. Whereas Valley Farm he loved passionately. He loved the little poky kitchen, where men's boots crumpled, and the dog slept with one eye open for fear of being trodden on, where the lamp hung over the table at night, and everything was as usual. He loved Marian's long low parlour, with its atmosphere of romance, its flower, its brook, its high rosewood piano. He loved the garden and the buildings that stood with their scarlet roofs on the naked edges of the fields, crept towards the wood as if for cover, the wild country sweeping down a valley and up the unsundered hills of the other side. Only to be there was an exhilaration and a joy to him. He loved Mrs. Loomis, with her unworldliness and her quaint cynicism; he loved Mr. Lovers, so warm and young and lovable; he loved Edgar, who is up when he came, and the boys and the children and Bill—even the row Cuck and the Indian game-cock called Tippeco. All the hidden Mirens. He could not give it up.

So he went as often, but he was usually with Edgar. Only all the family, including the father, joined in charades and games at evening. And here, Mirens drew them together, and they read *Afraid of the Dark* out of penny books, taking parts. It was great amusement. Marian was glad, and Mrs. Lovers was glad, and Mr. Lovers enjoyed it. Then they all learned songs together from record-rolls, singing in a circle round the fire. But now Paul was very rarely alone with Mirens. She wanted. When she and Edgar and he walked home together from chapel or from the literary society in Brevard, she knew his talk, so passionate and so unorthodox nowadays, was for her. She did envy Edgar, however, his cycling with Paul, his Friday nights, his days working in the fields. For her Friday nights and her French lessons were gone. She was nearly always alone, walking, pondering in the wood, reading, studying, dreaming, waiting. And he went to her frequently.

One Sunday evening they strolled to their old race haremory. Edgar had stayed to Communion—he wondered what it was like

## REPEAT OF MIRIAM

—with Miss Mooré. So Paul came on alone with Miriam to his home. He was more or less under her spell again. At first, they were discussing the sermon. He was saying more fully and towards Agnosticism, but such a religious Agnosticism that Miriam did not suffer so badly. They went at the Roman "Via de Jesus" street. Miriam was the threshold floor on which he stumbled out all his batch. While he transposed his ideas upon her soul, the truth came out for him. She alone was his threshold floor. She alone helped him towards realization. Always impassive, she submitted to his argument and expounding. And somehow, because of her, he gradually realized where he was wrong. And what he realized, he realized. She felt he could not do without her.

They came to the silent house. He took the key out of the scullery window, and they entered. All the time he went on with his discussion. He lit the gas, mended the fire, and brought her some cakes from the pantry. She sat on the sofa, quietly, with a glass in her hand. She wore a large white hat with some pinkish flowers. It was a cheap hat, but he liked it. Her face beneath was oval and serene, golden-brown and rosy. Always her hair were hid in her short curls. She watched him.

She liked him on Sundays. Then he wore a dark suit that stunted the like movement of his body. There was a clean, sharp-cut look about him. He went on with his thinking to her. Suddenly he reached for a Bible. Miriam liked the way he reached up — so sharp, straight to the mark. He turned the pages quickly, and read her a chapter of St. John. As he sat in the armchair reading, silent, his voice only thinking, she felt as if he were using her unconsciously as a man uses his tools or some work he is doing. She loved it. And the usefulness of his voice was like a reaching to something, and it was as if she were what he reached with. She sat back on the sofa away from him, and yet feeling herself the very consciousness his hand grasped. It gave her great pleasure.

Then he began to falter and to get self-conscious. And when he came to the verse, "A woman, when thou art married, hath herself become her hour in a crown," he missed it out. Miriam had felt him growing uncomfortable. She struck when the well-known words did not follow. He went on reading, but she did not hear. A gasp and shame made her bend her head. Six months ago he would have said it simply. Now there was a stretch in his running with her. Now she felt there was really something hostile between them, something of which they were ashamed.

He ate her cake mechanically. He tried to go on with his argument, but could not get back the right note. Soon Edgar came

in. Mrs. Morel had gone to her friends'. The three set off to Willey Farm.

Miriam looked over his spine with her. There was something else he wanted. He could not be satisfied; he could give her no peace. There was between them now always a ground for strife. She wanted to prove him. She believed that her chief need in life was herself. If she could prove it, both to herself and to him, the rest might go. she could simply trust to the future.

So in May she asked him to come to Willey Farm and meet Mrs. Dawson. There was something he harboured after. She saw him, wherever they spoke of Clara Dawson, wince and get slightly angry. He said he did not like her. Yet he was born to know about her. Well, he should put himself to the test. She believed that there were in him desires for higher things, and desires for love, and that the desire for the higher would conquer. At any rate, he should try. She forgot that her "higher" and "lower" were solitary.

He was rather excited at the idea of meeting Clara at Willey Farm. Mrs. Dawson came for the day. Her heavy, dark-coloured hair was coiled on top of her head. She wore a white blouse and navy skirt, and somewhere, wherever she was, seemed to make things look paltry and insignificant. When she was in the room, the kitchen seemed too small and mean altogether. Miriam's beautiful twilight garden looked still and staid. All the Lebores were adopted his garden. They found her rather hard to put up with. Yet she was perfectly amiable, but indifferent, and rather hard.

Paul did not come till afternoon. He was early. As he swung off his bicycle, Miriam saw him look round at the house eagerly. He would be disappointed if the visitor had not come. Miriam went out to meet him, knowing her hand because of the sunshine. Nourishments were coming out crimson under the cool green shadow of their leaves. The girl stood, dark-haired, glad to see him.

"Haven't Clara come?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Miriam in her usual tone. "She's reading."

He wheeled his bicycle into the house. He had put on a hand-sock tie, of which he was rather proud, and went to wash.

"She came this morning?" he asked.

"Yes," replied Miriam, as she walked at his side. "You said you'd bring me that letter from the man at Liberty's. Have you remembered?"

"Oh dear, no!" he said. "But ring at me till you get it."

"I don't like to ring at you."

"Do it *whether* or not. And is she *not* most agreeable?" he continued.

"You know I always think she is *quite* agreeable."

He was silent. Suddenly his attention to the early-to-day bird left the room. Miriam already began to suffer. They went upstairs towards the house. He took the clips off his trousers, but was too late to break the dust from his shoes, in spite of the rocks and tin.

Clara sat in the cool porch waiting. He saw the nape of her white neck, and the hair that filled from it. She rose, looking at him unconsciously. To steady herself she lifted her arm straight, in a manner that seemed at once to keep him at a distance, and yet to keep something to him. He noticed how her breast swelled under her blouse, and how her shoulders curved handsomely under the dust mantle at the top of her arm.

"You have changed a fine day," he said.

"It happens so," she said.

"Yes," he said, "I am glad."

She sat down, not thanking him for his politeness.

"What have you been doing all morning?" asked Paul of Miriam.

"Well, you see," said Miriam, laughing heartily, "Clara only came with before—and so—she's not been here very long."

Clara sat leaning on the table, holding aloud. He noticed her hands were large, but well kept. And the ribs on them seemed almost coarse, open, and white, with that golden hair. She did not mind if he observed her hands. She intended to scare him. Herberry was lay negligently on the table. Her mouth was closed as if she were offended, and the light her face slightly veiled.

"You were at Margaret Bonford's meeting the other evening," he said to her.

Miriam did not know this courteous Paul. Clara glanced at him.

"Yes," she said.

"Yes," asked Miriam, "how do you know?"

"I went to for a few minutes before the table came," he answered.

Clara turned away again rather distastefully.

"I think that's a lovely little woman," said Paul.

"Margaret Bonford?" exclaimed Clara. "She's a great deal cleverer than most men."

"Well, I didn't say she *wasn't*," he said, depreciating. "She's lovable for all that."

"And, of course, that's all that matters," said Clara witheringly.

He rubbed his head, rather perplexed, rather annoyed.

"I suppose it matters more than her disfigurement," he said. "which, after all, would never get her to heaven."

"It's not because she wants to get—o'n her fair share on earth," returned Clara. She spoke as if he were responsible for some deprivation which Miss Forthard suffered.

"Well," he said, "I thought she was warm, and awfully nice—only too kind. I wished she was sitting comfortably in peace——"

"During her husband's stockings," said Clara smilingly.

"I'm sure she wouldn't mind darnin' on-on my stockings," he said. "And I'm sure she'd do them well. Just as I wouldn't mind blacking her boots if she wanted me to."

But Clara refused to answer the rally of his. He talked to Miriam for a little while. The other woman held aloof.

"Well," he said, "I think I'll go and see Edgar. Is he at the land?"

"I believe," said Miriam, "he's gone for a load of coal. He should be back directly."

"Then," he said, "I'll go and meet him."

Miriam dared not propose anything for the three of them. He rose and left them.

On the top road, where the game was out, he saw Edgar walking lazily beside the mare, who loaded her white-stuffed forehead as she dragged the clanking load of coal. The young farmer's face lighted up as he saw his friend. Edgar was good-looking, with dark, warm eyes. His clothes were old and rather disreputable, and he walked with considerable pride.

"Hallo!" he said, seeing Paul bandaged. "Where are you going?"

"Come to meet you. Can't stand 'Nevermore'!"

Edgar's teeth flashed in a laugh of amusement.

"Who is 'Nevermore'?" he asked.

"The lady—Mrs. Curves—it ought to be Miss. The Raven that quothed 'Nevermore'."

Edgar laughed with glee.

"Don't you like her?" he asked.

"Not a bit no," said Paul. "Well, do you?"

"Not." The answer came with a deep ring of conviction.

"Not?" Edgar pursed up his lips. "I don't see she's much to my like." He stared a little. Then: "But why do you call her 'Nevermore'?" he asked.

"Well," said Paul, "if she looks at a man she says laughingly 'Nevermore,' and if she looks at herself in the looking-glass she says disdainfully 'Nevermore,' and if she thinks back she says it in disgust, and if she looks forward she says it cynically."

Edgar considered this speech, failed to make much out of it, and said, laughing:

"You think that's a mean-hearted?"

"She thinks that's," replied Paul.

"But you don't think so?"

"No," replied Paul.

"Wasn't she nice with you, then?"

"Could you imagine her nice with anybody?" asked the young man.

Edgar laughed. Together they unloaded the coal in the yard. Paul was rather self-conscious, because he knew Clara would see if she looked out of the window. She didn't look.

On Saturday afternoon the horses were brushed down and groomed. Paul and Edgar worked together, starting with the dogs that came from the pits of Jimmy and Flower.

"Do you know a new song to teach me?" said Edgar.

He continued to work all the time. The back of his neck was sun-red when he bent down, and he forgot that held the back were thick. Paul watched him sometimes.

"Mary Morrison?" suggested the younger.

Edgar agreed. He had a good voice, and he loved to learn all the songs he found could teach him, so that he could sing while he was casting. Paul had a very indifferent baritone voice, but a good ear. However, he sang jolly, the fear of Clara. Edgar repeated the line in a clear voice. At times they both broke off to sneeze, and first one, then the other, showed his nose.

Miriam was impatient of men. It took no time to attract them—even Paul. The thought is unpleasant in him that he could be so thoroughly absorbed in a triviality.

It was bedtime when they had finished.

"What song was that?" asked Miriam.

Edgar told her. The conversation turned to singing.

"We have such jolly ones," Miriam said to Clara.

Mrs. Davis ate her meal in a slow, dignified way. Whenever the men were present she grew distant.

"Do you like singing?" Miriam asked her.

"If it is good," she said.

Paul, of course, coloured.

"You mean if it is high-class and learned?" he said.

"I think a voice much training before the singing is anything," she said.

"You might as well insist on having people's voices trained before you allowed them to talk," he replied. "Really, people sing for their own pleasure, as a rule."

"And it may be for other people's discomfort."

"Then the other people should turn their eyes to their ears," he replied.

The boys laughed. There was a silence. He flushed deeply, and sat in silence.

After tea, when all the men had gone but Paul, Mrs. Larnes said to Clara:

"And you find life happier now?"

"Indubitably."

"And you are married?"

"So long as I can be free and independent."

"And you don't ever anything in your life?" asked Mrs. Larnes gently.

"I've put all that behind me."

Paul had been looking uncomfortable during this discourse. He got up.

"You'll find you're always tumbling over the things you've put behind you," he said. Then he took his departure to the cowshed. He felt he had been witty, and his rusty profit was high. He whistled as he went down the back track.

Miriam came for him a little later to know if he would go with Clara and her for a walk. They're off down to Straley Mill Farm. As they were going beside the brook, on the Willey Water side, looking through the brake at the edge of the wood, where pink raspberries glowed under a few umbrellas, they saw, beyond the new-track and the three barrel fence, a man leading a great bay horse through the pulkins. The big red horse seemed to dance romantically through that domain of green hard dirt, away there where the air was shadowy, as if it were in the past, among the fading blackbills that might have blossomed for Desire at least.

The three moved forward.

"What a treat to be a knight," he said, "and to have a pavilion here."

"And to have it shut up tight?" replied Clara.

"Yes," he answered, "singing with your mouth at your heels. I would carry your banner of wheat and green and heliograph. I would have 'W.S.F.U.' emblazoned on my shield, beneath a woman's compass."

"I have no doubt," said Clara, "that you would much rather fight for a woman than for her fight for herself."

"I would. When she fights for herself she seems like a dog before a hound-glass, gone into a small fury with its own shadow."

"And you are the hound-glass?" she asked, with a curl of the lip.

"On the shadow," he replied.



"I am afraid," she said, "that you are too close."

"Well, I leave it to you to be good," he returned, laughing. "Be good, sweet maid, and just let us be close."

But Clara wearied of his flattery. Suddenly, looking at her, he saw that the upward lifting of her face was uneasy and not scorn. His heart grew tender for everybody. He turned and was gentle with Mirena, whom he had neglected all these.

At the wood's edge they met Lamb, a thin, swarthy man of forty, master of Strelley Mill, which he ran as a cattle-raising farm. He held the halter of the powerful stallion indifferently, as if he were tired. The three stood to let him pass over the stepping-stones of the first brook. Paul admired that to keep an animal should walk on such springy toes, with an entire moon of vapour Lamb pulled up before them.

"Tell your father, Mr. Laven," he said, in a peculiar piping voice, "that his young horse 'as broke that bottom fence three days 'at' naps!"

"Which?" asked Mirena, tremulous.

The great horse brayed hoarsely, shaking round its red flanks, and looking superciliously with its wonderful big eyes upwards from under its lowered head and falling mane.

"Come along a bit," replied Lamb, "we'll show you."

The man and the woman went forward. It danced sideways, shaking its white fetlocks and looking frightened, as a fish swells in the brook.

"No hanky-parakey!" said the man affectionately to the horse.

It went up the bank in little leaps, then splashed freely through the second brook. Clara, walking with a kind of self-abandon, watched it half-fascinated, half-conspicuous. Lamb stopped and pointed to the fence under some willows.

"There, you see where they got through," he said. "My man's dray 'em back three times."

"Yes," answered Mirena, colouring as if she went at fault.

"Are you comin' in?" asked the man.

"No thanks, but we should like to go by the pond."

"Well, just as you're a maid," he said.

The heart gave little sideways of pleasure at being so near home.

"He is glad to be back," said Clara, who was interested in the creature.

"Yes—it's been a tidy nap to-day."

They went through the gate, and saw approaching them from the big farmhouse a smallish, dark, remarkable-looking woman of about thirty-five. Her hair was touched with grey, her dark eyes looked wild. She walked with her hands behind her back. Her

brother went forward. As it drew her, the big bay stallion whinnyed again. She came up readily.

"Are you home again, my boy?" she said tenderly to the horse, not to the man. The great beast shied round to her, shaking his head. She struggled into his mouth the wrinkled yellow apple she had been holding behind her back, then she kissed him near the eye. He gave a big sigh of pleasure. She held his head in her arms against his breast.

"Isn't he splendid?" said Mimsie to her.

Miss Lamb looked up. Her dark eyes glanced straight at Paul.

"Oh, good-evening, Miss Leavers," she said. "It's ages since you've been down."

Mimsie introduced her friends.

"Your horse is a fine fellow!" said Clara.

"Isn't he?" Again she kissed him. "As loving as any man!"

"More loving than most men, I should think," replied Clara.

"He's a nice boy!" cried the woman, again embracing the horse.

Clara, fascinated by the big beast, went up to stroke his neck.

"He's quite gentle," said Miss Lamb. "Don't you think big fellows are?"

"He's a beauty!" replied Clara.

She wanted to look in his eyes. She wanted him to look at her.

"It's a pity he can't talk," she replied.

"Oh, but he can—all but," replied the other woman.

Then her brother moved on with the horse.

"Are you coming in? Do come in, Miss—I didn't catch it."

"More," said Mimsie. "No, we won't come in, but we should like to go by the mill-pond."

"Yes—yes, do. Do you fish, Mr. More?"

"No," said Paul.

"Because if you do you might come and fish my trout," said Miss Lamb. "We scarcely see a soul from week's end to week's end—I should be thankful."

"What fish are there in the pond?" he asked.

They went through the front garden, over the stable, and up the steep bank to the pond, which lay in shadow, with its two wooded slopes. Paul walked with Miss Lamb.

"I shouldn't mind welcoming here," he said.

"Do," she replied. "Come when you like. My brother will be awfully pleased to talk with you. He is so quiet, because there is no one to talk to. Do come and soon."

Clara came up.

"It's a few days," she said, "and so clear."

"Yes," said Miss Lamb.

"Do you wait?" said Paul. "Miss Lamb was just saying we could come when we liked."

"Of course that's the first-hand," said Miss Lamb.

They talked a few moments, then went on up the wild hill, leaving the lady, haggard-faced woman on the bank.

The hillside was all ripe with sunbush. It was wild and sunny, green over to rubies. The three walked in silence. Then:

"She makes me feel uncomfortable," said Paul.

"You mean Miss Lamb?" asked Miriam. "Yes."

"What's a matter with her? Is she going dotty with being too lonely?"

"Yes," said Miriam. "It's not the right sort of life for her. I think it's cruel to bury her there. I really ought to go and see her now. But—she upsets me."

"She makes me feel sorry for her—yes, and she bothers me," he said.

"I suppose," blurted Clara suddenly, "she wants a man."

The other two were silent for a few moments.

"But it's the loneliness needs her crushed!" said Paul.

Clara did not answer, but strode on uphill. She was walking with her head hanging, her legs swinging as she kicked through the dead tangles and the sunbush grass, her arms hanging loose. Rather than walking, her handsome body seemed to be blundering up the hill. A hot wave went over Paul. He was curious about her. Perhaps his had been equal to her. He forgot Miriam, who was walking beside him talking to him. She glanced at him, finding he did not answer her. His eyes were fixed ahead on Clara.

"Do you still think she is disconcerting?" she asked.

He did not notice that the question was sudden. It ran with his thoughts.

"Something's the matter with her," he said.

"Yes," answered Miriam.

They found at the top of the hill a hidden wild field, two sides of which were backed by the wood, the other sides by high loose ledges of limestone and older-buffaloes. Between these overgrown bushes were gaps that the cattle might have walked through had there been any cattle now. There the turf was smooth as velvet, packed and held by the rubies. The field itself was coarse, and crowded with tall, big cowslips that had never been cut. Clusters of strong flowers rose everywhere above the coarse sunbush of trees. It was like a roadstead crowded with tall, heavy shipping.

"Ah!" cried Miriam, and she looked at Paul, her dark eyes

flower. He smiled. Together they enjoyed the field of flowers. Clara, a little way off, was looking at the cowslips disconsolately. Paul and Miriam stayed close together, talking in subdued tones. He leered on one knee, quickly gathering the best blossoms, moving from east to west restlessly, talking softly all the time. Miriam plucked the flowers lovingly, lingering over them. He always seemed to her too quick and almost scornful. Yet his touches had a natural beauty more than hers. He loved them, but as if they were his and he had a right to them. She had more reverence for them: they held something she had not.

The flowers were very fresh and sweet. He wanted to drink them. As he gathered them, he ate the little yellow trumpets. Clara was still wondering about disconsolately. Going towards her, he said:

"Why don't you get some?"

"I don't believe in it. They look better growing."

"But you'd like some?"

"They want to be left."

"I don't believe they do."

"I don't want the corpse of flowers about me," she said.

"That's a stiff, artificial reason," he said. "They don't die any quicker in water than on their roots. And besides, they look nice in a bowl—they look jolly. And you only call a thing a corpse because it looks corpse-like."

"Whether it is one or not?" she argued.

"It isn't one to me. A dead flower isn't a corpse of a flower." Clara now ignored him.

"And even so—what right have you to pull them?" she asked.

"Because I like them, and want them—and there's plenty of them."

"And that is sufficient?"

"Yes. Why not? I'm sure they'd smell nice in your room in Nottingham."

"And I should have the pleasure of watching them die."

"But whether they die or not doesn't matter if they do die."

Whereupon he left her, and went stooping over the clumps of tangled flowers which thickly sprinkled the field like pale, huddled fawn-claws. Miriam had come close. Clara was looking, watching some more from the cowslips.

"I think," said Miriam, "if you treat them with reverence you don't do them any harm. It is the spirit you plant them in that matters."

"Yes," he said. "But no, you get 'em because you want 'em, and that's all." He held out his bunch.

Miriam was silent. He picked some more.

"Look at these!" he continued, "marry and hairy like little cats and like boys with fat legs."

Clara's hat lay on the grass not far off. She was kneeling, bending forward till as usual she flowered. Her neck gave him a sharp pang, such a beautiful thing, yet not proud of itself just now. Her bosom swung slightly in her blouse. The arching curve of her back was beautiful and wrong; she wore no stays. Suddenly, without knowing, he was scattering a handful of cowslips over her hair and neck, saying:

"Acher to what; and dust to dust,  
If the Lord won't have you the devil must."

The daisy flowers fell on her neck. She looked up at him, with almost painful, scared gray eyes, wondering what he was doing. Flowers fell on her hair, and she shut her eyes.

Suddenly, standing there above her, he felt upward.

"I thought you wanted a harvest," he said, ill at ease.

Clara laughed strongly, and rose, picking the cowslips from her hair. She took up her hat and pinned it on. One flower had remained tangled in her hair. He saw, but would not tell her. He gathered up the flowers he had sprinkled over her.

At the edge of the wood the bluebells had flowered over him the field and stood there like flood-water. But they were fading now. Clara stayed up to shape. He wandered after her. The bluebells pleased him.

"Look how they've come out of the wood!" he said.

Then she turned with a flash of warmth and of gratitude.

"Yes," she smiled.

His blood beat up.

"It makes me think of the wild men of the woods, how terrified they would be when they got hence or hence with the open space."

"Do you think they were?" she asked.

"I wonder which was more frightened among old tribes—those hurrying out of their darkness of woods upon all the space of light, or those from the open dipping into the forests."

"I should think the second," she answered.

"Yes, you do feel like one of the open space men, trying to force yourself into the dark, don't you?"

"How should I know?" she answered quietly.

The conversation ended there.

The evening was deepening over the earth. Already the valley was full of shadow. Over tiny squares of light stood opposite at

Gravelly Bank Farm. Brightness was returning on the tops of the hills. Miriam came up slowly, her face as her big, loose bunch of flowers, walking side-deep through the scattered flock of cowslips. Several her the trees were coming into shape, all shadows.

"Shall we go?" she asked.

And the three turned away. They were all silent. Going down the path, they could see the light of home right across, and on the ridge of the hill a thin dark outline with little lights, where the village twinkled the day.

"It has been nice, hasn't it?" he asked.

Miriam murmured again. Glast was silent.

"Don't you think so?" he persisted.

But she walked with her head up, and said not a word. He could tell by the way she moved, as if she didn't care, that she refused.

As the three Paul took his mother to Lincoln. She was bright and enthusiastic as ever, but as he sat opposite her in the railway carriage, she seemed to look fixed. He had a momentary sensation as if she were slipping away from him. Then he wanted to get hold of her, to leave her, almost to chain her. He felt he must keep hold of her with his hand.

They drew near to the city. Both were at the window looking for the cathedral.

"There she is, mother!" he cried.

They saw the great cathedral lying coquettish above the plain.

"Ah!" she exclaimed. "So she is!"

He looked at his mother. Her blue eyes were watching the cathedral quietly. She seemed again as he looked her. Something in the central aspect of the upraised cathedral, blue and noble against the sky, was reflected in her, something of the finality, What was, was. With all his young will he could not alter it. He saw her face, the skin still fresh and pink and downy, her eyes's feet near her own, her mouth ready, riding a little, her mouth always closed with diffidence, and there was on her the same eternal look, as if she knew him as her. He bent against it with all the strength of his soul.

"Look, mother, how big she is above the town! Think, there are streets and streets below her! She looks bigger than the city altogether."

"So she does!" exclaimed his mother, beaming bright and life again. But he had seen her sitting, looking steady out of the window at the cathedral, her face and eyes fixed, reflecting the immutability of life. And the mouth's-set near her eyes, and her mouth shut as hard, made him feel he would go mad.

## DEPRAY OF MIRIAM

They ate a meal that she considered wildly extravagant.

"Don't imagine I like it," she said, as she sat her coffee. "I don't like it, I really don't! Just think of your money wasted!"

"You never mind my money," he said. "You forget I'm a fellow taking his girl for an evening."

And he bought her some blue velvet.

"Snap it at once, for!" she commanded. "How can I do it?"

"You've got nothing to do. Stand still!"

And in the middle of High Street he stuck the flower in her coat.

"An old thing like me!" she said, smiling.

"You are," he said, "I want people to think we're awful wealthy, to look deep."

"I'll jewel your head," she laughed.

"Sweet!" he commanded. "Be a small pigeon."

It took him an hour to get her through the street. She stood above Quincy Hall, she stood before Grand Row, she stood everywhere, and exclaimed.

A man came up, took off his hat, and bowed to her.

"Can I show you the town, madam?"

"No, thank you," she answered. "I've got my man."

Then Paul was cross with her for not answering with more dignity.

"You go away with you!" she exclaimed. "Ha! don't be the Jew's Blouse! Now, you remember that lecture, Paul—"

But she could scarcely climb the cathedral hill. He did not notice. Then suddenly he found her unable to speak. He took her into a little public-house, where she rested.

"It's nothing," she said. "My heart is only a little bit, one great upset it."

He did not answer, but looked at her. Again his heart was caught with a hot grip. He wanted to cry, he wanted to smash things in fury.

They sat off again, pace by pace, so slowly. And every step seemed like a weight on his chest. He felt as if his heart would burst. At last they came to the top. She stood exhausted, looking at the marble gate, looking at the cathedral front. She had quite forgotten herself.

"Now this is better than I thought it could be!" she cried.

But he hated it. Everywhere he followed her, breathing. They sat together in the cathedral. They attended a late service in the choir. She was tired.

"I suppose it is open to anybody?" she asked him.

"Yes," he replied. "Do you think they'd have the damned clock to stand so long?"

"Well, I'm sure," she exclaimed, "they would if they heard your language."

His face seemed to smart again, with joy and pain during the service. And all the time he was waiting to sign and send things and cry.

Afterwards, when they were leaning over the wall, looking at the town below, he blurted suddenly:

"Why can't a man have a young mother? What is she old for?"

"Well," his mother laughed, "she can't properly help it."

"And why wasn't I the eldest son? Look—then say the young ones have the advantage—but look, they had the young mother. You should have had me for your eldest son."

"I don't arrange it," she remonstrated. "Come to consider, you're as much as old as me."

He turned on her, white, his eyes burning.

"What are you old for?" he said, mad with his impotence. "Why can't you walk? Why can't you come with me to places?"

"At one time," she replied, "I could have run up that hill a good deal faster than you."

"What's the good of that to me?" he cried, beating his fist on the wall. Then he became plaintive. "It's too bad of you to be ill, Mamma, it is—"

"Ill?" she cried. "I'm a bit old, and you'll have to put up with it, that's all."

They were quiet. But it was as much as they could bear. They got jolly again now and then. As they sat by Brayford, watching the boats, he told her about Clara. His mother asked him innumerable questions.

"Then who does she live with?"

"With her mother, on Blackett Hill."

"And have they enough to keep them?"

"I don't think so. I think they do hard work."

"And where do her shares, my boy?"

"I don't know that she's charming, mother. But she's nice. And she seems straight, you know—not a bit deep, not a bit—"

"But she's a good deal older than you."

"She's thirty, I'm going of twenty-three."

"You haven't told me what you like her for."

"Because I don't know—a sort of defiance with that's got—a sort of angry way."

Mrs. Bond considered. She would have been glad now for any way to fall in love with some woman who would—she did not know what. But he seemed so, got so furious suddenly, and again was melancholic. She wished he knew some nice woman— She did



and knew what she wished, but left it vague. At any rate she was not hostile to the idea of Clara.

Agnes, too, was getting married. Leonard had gone away to work in Birmingham. One week-end when he was home she had said to him:

"You don't look very well, my lad."

"I don't," he said. "I feel somehow as though, ma,"

He called her "ma" already in his boyish fashion.

"Are you sure they're good lodgings?" she asked.

"Yes—yes. Only—it's a wonder when you have to post your own tea out—an' nobody to growse if you want it in your season and egg it up. It sometimes takes a' the taste out of it."

Mrs. Morel laughed.

"And so it keeps you up?" she said.

"I don't. I want to get married," he blurted, rubbing his fingers and looking down at his boots. There was a silence.

"But," she exclaimed, "I thought you said you'd wait another year."

"Yes, I did say so," he replied stubbornly.

Agnes she considered.

"And you know," she said, "Annie's a bit of a spendthrift. She's moved no more than eleven pounds. And I know, lad, you haven't had much chance."

He coloured up to the ears.

"I've got thirty-three quid," he said.

"It doesn't go far," she answered.

He said nothing, but twisted his fingers.

"And you know," she said, "I've nothing—"

"I didn't want, ma!" he cried, very red, suffering and unconcerning.

"No, my lad, I know. I was only wishing I had. And take away five pounds for the wedding and things—in eleven twenty-five pounds. You won't do much on that."

He turned still, impotent, stubborn, not looking up.

"But do you really want to get married?" she asked. "Do you feel as if you might?"

He gave her one straight look from his blue eyes.

"Yes," he said.

"Then," she replied, "we must all do the best we can for it, lad."

The next time he looked up there were tears in his eyes.

"I don't want Annie to feel handicapped," he said struggling.

"My lad," she said, "you're steady—you've got a decent place. If a man had wanted me I'd have married him on his last week's

wagon. She may find it a bit hard to start home. Young girls are like that. They look forward to the fine home they think they'll have. But I had expensive furniture. It's not everything."

So the wedding took place almost immediately. Arthur came home, and was splendid in uniform. Annie looked nice in a downy gown that she could take for Sunday. Mabel called her a find for getting married, and was civil with her step-daughter. Mrs. Mabel had white tips in her bosom, and some white on her blouse, and was tested by both her sons for thinking herself as good. Leonard was jolly and cordial, and felt a fearful fool. Paul could not give her what Annie wanted to get married for. He was fond of her, and she of him. Still, he hoped rather hopelessly that it would turn out all right. Arthur was amazingly handsome in his uniform and yellow, and he knew it well, but was sorely ashamed of the uniform. Annie cried her eyes up in the kitchen, on hearing her mother. Mrs. Mabel cried a little, then patted her on the back and said:

"But don't cry, child, he'll be good to you."

Mabel stamped and said she was a fool to go and be herself up. Leonard looked white and overwrought. Mrs. Mabel said to him:

"I'll warrant to you, my lad, and hold you responsible for her."

"You say," he said, nearly dead with the ordeal. And it was all over.

When Mabel and Arthur went in bed, Paul sat talking, as he often did, with his mother.

"You're not sorry she's married, mother, are you?" he asked.

"I'm not sorry she's married—but it seems strange that she should go from me. Heaven seems to me hard that she can prefer to go with her Leonard. That's how mothers are—I know it's silly."

"And shall you be generous about her?"

"When I think of my own wedding day," his mother answered, "I can only hope her life will be different."

"But you can wish him to be good to her?"

"Yes, yes. They say he's not good enough for her. But I say if a man is genuine, as he is, and a girl is fond of him—then—it should be all right. He's as good as she."

"So you don't mind?"

"I would never have let a daughter of mine marry a man I didn't feel to be genuine through and through. And yes, there's a girl now she's gone."

They were both miserable, and wanted her back again. It seemed to Paul his mother looked poorly, in her new black silk blouse with its lot of white trimming.

"At any rate, mother, I'll never marry," he said.

"Ay, they all say that, my lad. You're not near the age yet. Only want a year or two."

"But I don't marry, mother. I shall live with you, and we'll have a servant."

"Ay, my lad, it's easy to talk. We'll see when the time comes."

"What time? I'm nearly twenty-three."

"Yes, you're not one that would marry young. But in three years' time—"

"I shall be with you just the same!"

"We'll see, my boy, we'll see."

"But you don't want me to marry?"

"I shouldn't like to think of you going through your life without anybody to care for you, and do—for."

"And you think it ought to marry?"

"Sooner or later every man ought."

"But you'd rather it were later."

"It would be hard—and very hard. It's as they say.

'A son's my son till he takes him a wife,  
But my daughter's my daughter the whole of her life.'"

"And you think I'd let a wife take me from you?"

"Well, you wouldn't ask her to marry your mother as well as you," Mrs. Mowd smiled.

"She could do what she liked; she wouldn't have to interfere."

"She wouldn't—till she'd got you—and then you'd see."

"I never will see. I'll never marry while I've got you—I won't."

"But I shouldn't like to leave you with nobody, my boy," she cried.

"You're not going to leave me. What are you? Fifty-three! I'll give you till seventy-five. Then you are, I'm fit and forty-four. Then I'll marry a good body. See!"

His mother sat and laughed.

"Go to bed," she said—"go to bed!"

"And we'll have a pretty house, you and me, and a servant, and I'll be just all right. I'll perhaps be rich with my pawning."

"Will you go to bed?"

"And then you'll have a pretty carriage. See yourself—a kind Queen Victoria trotting round."

"I tell you to go to bed," she laughed.

He kissed her and went. His plans for the future were always the same.

Mrs. Mowd sat brooding—about her daughter, about Paul, about Arthur. She drifted at losing Anna. The family was very closely bound. And she felt she must live now, as he with her

children. Life was so rich for her. Paul wanted her, and so did Arthur. Arthur never knew how deeply he loved her. He was a creature of the moment. Never yet had he been forced to realize himself. The army had disciplined his body, but not his soul. He was in perfect health and very handsome. His dark, vigorous hair sat close to his smallish head. There was something childish about his nose, something almost girlish about his dark blue eyes. But he had the full and mouth of a man under his brown mustache, and his jaw was strong. It was his father's mouth; it was the nose and eyes of her own mother's people—good-looking, weak-principled folk. Mrs. Morel was anxious about him. Once he had really run the rig he was safe. But how far would he go?

The army had not really done him any good. His command barely the authority of the petty officers. He hated having to obey as if he were an animal. But he had too much sense to lack. So he turned his attention to getting the best out of it. He could sing, he was a born-companion. Often he got into scrapes, but they were the merry scrapes that are easily forgotten. So he made a good time out of it, while his self-respect went at suppression. He trusted to his good looks and handsome figure, his refinement, his direct references to get him most of what he wanted, and he was not disappointed. Yet he was restless. Something seemed to gnaw him inside. He was never still, he was never alone. With his mother he was rather humble. Paul he admired and loved and despised slightly. And Paul admired and loved and despised him slightly.

Mrs. Morel had had a few pounds left to her by her father, and she decided to buy her son out of the army. His was wild with joy. Now he was like a lad taking a holiday.

He had always been fond of Beatrice Wyld, and during his furlough he picked up with her again. She was stronger and better in health. The two often went long walks together, Arthur taking her arm in soldier's fashion, rather stiffly. And she came to play the piano while he sang. Then Arthur would unhook his tunic collar. His gaze shrank, his eyes were bright, he sang in a merry tone. Afterwards they sat together on the sofa. He seemed to share his body: she was aware of him so—the strong chest, the sides, the thighs in their close-fitting trousers.

He liked to lapse into the children when he talked to her. She would sometimes smoke with him. Occasionally she would only take a few whiffs at his cigarette.

"Nay," he said to her one evening, when she reached for his cigarette. "Nay, the disease. I'll give thee a smoke and if that's a smid."

"I wanted a whiff, no less at all," she answered.

"Well, as' this oft he's a whiff," he said, "along w' it him."

"I want a draw at thy bag," she cried, reaching for the cigarette between his lips.

He was sitting with his shoulder touching her. She was usual and quick as lightning. He just managed.

"I I g'f's thee a smoke him," he said.

"Tha't's a better manner, Artie Bivert," she said, sitting back.

"He's a smoke him?"

The soldier leaned forward to her, smiling. His face was near hers.

"Shower?" she replied, turning away her head.

He took a draw at his cigarette, and puffed up his mouth, and put his lips close to her. His dark-brown cropped mustache stood out like a brush. She looked at the puckered corners his lips, then suddenly snatched the cigarette from his fingers and darted away. No, looking after her, seized the comb from her back hair. She turned, threw the cigarette at him. He picked it up, put it in his mouth, and sat down.

"Nainsood!" she cried. "Give me my comb!"

She was afraid that her hair, specially done for him, would come down. She stood with her hands to her head. He hid the comb between his knees.

"I've now got it," he said.

The cigarette twinkled between his lips with laughter as he spoke.

"Lave!" she said.

"Is true as I've have!" he laughed, showing his teeth.

"You brazen beg!" she exclaimed, reaching and snuffing for the comb, which he hid under his knee. As she wrenched with him, pulling at his smooth, tight-pressed knee, he laughed till he lay back on the sofa shaking with laughter. The cigarette fell from his mouth, almost slipping his throat. Under his defense was the blood flushed up, and he laughed till his blue eyes were blinded, his throat swollen almost to choking. Then he sat up. Heavier was putting on her comb.

"The tickled me, best," he said thickly.

Like a flash her small white hand went out and smacked his face. He started up, glaring at her. They stared at each other. Slowly the flash moved her cheek, she dropped her eyes, then her head. He sat down calmly. She went into the hallway to adjust her hair. In private there she shed a few tears, she did not know what for.

When she returned she was puffed up about. But it was only a fluff over her face. His, with ruffled hair, was resting upon the sofa.

She sat down opposite, in the arm-chair, and another spoke. The clock ticked in the silence for a moment.

"You were in the way, first," he said at length, half-apologetically.

"Well, you shouldn't be thrown," she replied.

There was again a long silence. He whirled to himself like a man much agitated but defenceless. Suddenly she went across to him and kissed him.

"Did it, just that?" she asked.

He lifted his face, smiling curiously.

"Kiss?" he asked her.

"Darren?!" she asked.

"Go on!" he challenged, his mouth lifted to her.

Deliberately, and with a peculiar quivering smile that seemed to overspread her whole body, she put her mouth on his. Instantly his arms folded round her. As soon as the long kiss was finished she drew back her head from him, put her delicate fingers on his neck, through the open collar. Then she closed her eyes, giving herself up again to a kiss.

She acted of her own free will. What she would do she did, and made nobody responsible.

Paul felt life changing around him. The conditions of youth were gone. Now it was a house of grown-up people. Annie was a married woman, Arthur was following his own pleasure in a way unknown to his life. For so long they had all lived at home, and gone out to pass their time. But now, for Annie and Arthur, life lay outside their mother's house. They came home for holiday and for rest. So there was that restlessness, half-angry feeling about the house, as if the birds had flown. Paul became more and more unsettled. Annie and Arthur had gone. He was restless to follow. Yet home was for him hands his mother. And still there was something else, something outside, something he wanted.

He grew more and more restless. Miriam did not satisfy him. He still made choice to be with her grew weaker. Sometimes he met Clara in Nottingham, sometimes he went to meetings with her, sometimes he saw her at Wilby Farm. But on these last occasions the relations became strained. There was a triangle of antagonism between Paul and Clara and Miriam. With Clara he took on a smart, worldly, mocking tone very antagonistic to Miriam. It did not matter what went before. She might be his lover and seducer with him. Then as soon as Clara appeared, it all vanished, and he played to the antagonist.

Miriam had one beautiful evening with him in the hay. He had been on the horse-back, and, having finished, came to help

her to put the key in cock. Then he talked to her of his hopes and dreams, and his whole soul seemed to be born before her. She felt as if she watched the very quivering stuff of life as he spoke. The years came back—they walked home together. He seemed to have come to her because he needed her so badly, and she listened to him, gave him all her love and her faith. It seemed to her he brought her the best of himself to keep, and that she would guard it all her life. Nay, the sky did not dimple the stars more closely and eternally than she would guard the good in the soul of Paul Morel. She went on home alone, feeling washed, glad in her faith.

And then, the next day, Clara came. They went to have tea in the hayfield. Miriam watched the evening dancing to gold and shadows. And all the time Paul was speaking with Clara. He made higher and higher leaps of joy that they were jumping over Miriam did not care for the game, and stood aside. Edgar and Geoffrey and Maurice and Clara and Paul jumped. Paul was, because he was light. Clara's blood was roused. She could run like an Amazon. Paul loved the determined way she rushed at the haystack and leaped, landed on the other side, her brown shadow, her thick hair coming undone.

"You touched!" he cried. "You touched!"

"No!" she flushed, turning to Edgar. "I didn't touch, did I? What's it then?"

"I couldn't say," laughed Edgar.

None of them could try.

"But you touched," said Paul. "You've beaten."

"I did not touch!" she cried.

"As plain as anything," said Paul.

"Don't say that!" she cried to Edgar.

"Nay," Edgar laughed. "I don't. You must do it yourself."

"And nothing can alter the fact that you touched," laughed Paul.

She was furious with him. Her little triumph before these boys and men was gone. She had forgotten herself in the game. Now he was so humble to her.

"I think you are damnable!" she said.

And again he laughed, in a way that tortured Miriam.

"And I know you couldn't jump that heap," he teased.

She turned her back on him. Yet everybody could see that the only person she feared to, or was conscious of, was he, and he of her. It pleased the men to see this battle between them. But Miriam was tortured.

Paul could choose the lower in place of the higher, she knew. He could be unfaithful to himself, unfaithful to the real, deep Paul Morel. There was a danger of his becoming shallow, of his

running after his satisfactions like any Arthur, or like his father. It made Minnie better to think that he should shove away his soul for this flippant traffic of treachery with Clara. She walked on between and alone, while the other two stifled each other, and Paul spat out.

And afterwards, he would not own it, but he was rather ashamed of himself, and prosecuted himself before Minnie. There again he faltered.

"It's not religious to be religious," he said. "I reckon a crew is religious when it sails across the ship. But it only does it because it feels itself carried to where it's going, not because it thinks it is being eternal."

But Minnie knew that one should be religious in everything, have God, whatever God might be, present in everything.

"I don't believe God knows such a lot about Himself," he cried. "God doesn't know things, He *is* things. And I'm sure He's not useful."

And then it occurred to her that Paul was arguing God as to his own side, because he wanted his own way and his own pleasure. There was a long battle between him and her. He was utterly unfaithful to her even as her own promises; that he was ashamed then repentant; then he heard her, and went off again. Those were the ever-recurring conditions.

She heard him to the bottom of his soul. There she remained—and, passive, a worshipper. And he caused her sorrow. Half the time he proved for her, half the time he proved her. She was his conscience, and he felt, somehow, he had got a conscience that was too much for him. He could not leave her, because in one way she did not hold the best of him. He could not stay with her because she did not take the rest of him, which was dangerous. So he choked himself long moments over her.

When she was twenty-one he wrote her a letter which could only have been written to her.

"May I speak of our old, worn love, this last time. It, too, is changing, is it not? Say, has not the body of that love died, and left you its inevitable soul? You see, I can give you a spiritless love, I have given it you the long, long time, but not embodied passion. See, you are a soul. I have given you what I would give a body man—as a mystic monk to a mystic soul. Surely you exceed it here. You are right—no, have regretted—the other. In all our relations no body enters. I do not talk to you through the senses—rather through the spirit. That is why we cannot love in the common sense. There is not an everyday affection. As yet we are



mortal, and to live life by side with one another would be dreadful, for somehow with you I cannot long be parted, and, you know, to be always beyond this mortal state would be to lose it. If people marry, they must live together as affectionate humans, who may be contemplative with each other without feeling awkward—not as you and I. So I feel it.

"Gosh! I received this letter—I doubt it. But there—it is best to understand. An answer."

Miriam read this letter twice, after which she sealed it up. A year later she broke the seal to show her mother the letter.

"You are a man—you are a man." The words went into her brain again and again. Nothing he ever had said had gone into her so deeply, firmly. Was a mortal wound.

She answered him two days after the party.

"Our sympathy would have been all-beautiful but for one little mistake," she quoted. "Was the mistake mine?"

Almost instantly he replied to her from Nottingham, sending her at the same time a little "Omar Khayyam."

"I am glad you answered; you are so calm and natural you put me to shame. What a reader I am! We are often out of sympathy. But in fundamental we may always be together I think.

"I must thank you for your sympathy with my painting and drawing. Many a sketch is dedicated to you. I do look forward to your criticisms, which, to my shame and glory, are always good appreciations. It is a lovely job, that. An answer."

This was the end of the first phase of Paul's love-affair. He was now about twenty-three years old, and, though still virgin, the sex instinct that Miriam had over-refined for so long now grew particularly strong. Often, as he talked to Clara Dewar, came that thickening and quaking of his blood, that perverse consciousness in the breast, as if something were alive there, a new self or a new centre of consciousness, warning him that sooner or later he would have to ask one woman or another. But he belonged to Miriam. Of that she was so doubly sure that he allowed her right

*Clara*

When he was twenty-three years old Paul went in a landscape to the winter exhibition at Nottingham Castle. Miss Jordan had taken a good deal of interest in him, had invited him to her house, where he met other artists. He was beginning to grow ambitious.

One morning the postman came just as he was washing in the scullery. Suddenly he heard a wild noise from his mother. Rushing into the kitchen, he found her standing on the hearthrug wildly waving a letter and crying "Hurrah!" as if she had gone mad. He was shocked and frightened.

"Why, mother?" he exclaimed.

She flew to him, flung her arms round him for a moment, then saved the letter, crying:

"Hurrah, my boy! I know we should do it!"

He was afraid of her—the small, severe woman with graying hair suddenly bursting out in such frenzy. The postman came running back, afraid something had happened. They saw his tipped cap over the short curtain. Mrs. Morel rushed to the door.

"His picture's got five guineas, Fred," she cried, "and is sold for twenty guineas."

"My word, that's something like!" said the young postman, whom they had known all his life.

"And Major Johnston has bought it!" she cried.

"It looks like reason!" something, that does, Mrs. Morel," said the postman, his blue eyes bright. He was glad to have brought such a lucky letter. Mrs. Morel went indoors and sat down, weeping. Paul was afraid lest she might have misread the letter, and might be disappointed after all. He scrutinized it once, twice. Yes, he became convinced it was true. Then he sat down, his heart beating with joy.

"Mother!" he exclaimed.

"Didn't I say we should do it?" she said, pretending she was not crying.

He took the letter off the fire and pushed the tea.

"You didn't think, mother?"—he began vacillatingly.

"No, my son—not to make—then I expected a good deal."

"But not so much," he said.

"Now—now! I know we should do it."

And then she recognized her companion, apparently at least. He sat with his shirt turned back, showing his young chest almost like a girl's, and the towel in his hand, his hair sticking up wet.

"Twenty guineas, mother! That's just what you wanted to buy Arthur out. Now you needn't borrow any. I'll just do."

"Indeed, I shan't take it all," she said.

"But why?"

"Because I shan't."

"Well—you have twelve pounds, I'll have none."

They cavilled about sharing the twenty guineas. She wanted to take only the five pounds she needed. He would not hear of it. So they got over the storm of passion by quarrelling.

Moorl came home at night from the pit, saying:

"They tell me Paul's got first prize for his picture, and sold it to Lord Henry Berkeley for fifty pounds."

"Oh, what money people do sell!" she cried.

"Ha!" he answered. "I told I was sure it was a lie. But they said that old Lord Biddiscombe."

"As if I would sell him such stuff!"

"Ha!" answered the man.

But he was disappointed nevertheless.

"It's true he has got the first prize," said Mrs. Moorl.

The money sat heavily on his chest.

"Has he, bejays!" he exclaimed.

He stared across the room fixedly.

"But as for fifty pounds—such nonsense!" She was silent awhile.

"Major Morston bought it for twenty guineas, that's true."

"Twenty guineas! The other says!" exclaimed Moorl.

"Yes, and it was worth it."

"Ay!" he said. "I don't misbehave it. But twenty guineas for a lot of pictures! as he knocked off in an hour or two!"

He was silent with wonder of his son. Mrs. Moorl smiled, as if it were nothing.

"And what does he handle the money?" asked the collier.

"That I couldn't tell you. When the picture is sent home, I suppose."

There was silence. Moorl stared at the negro-balls instead of eating his dinner. His black nose, with the hand all grafted with work lay on the table. His wife pretended not to see him rub the back of his head across his eyes, nor the sweat in the forehead on his black face.

"Yes, and that other lad 'ud 'a done as much if they hadna he killed 'em," he said quietly.

The thought of William went through Miss Morel like a cold blade. It left her feeling she was dead, and wanted none.

Paul was invited to dinner at Mr. Jackson's. Afterwards he said: "Mother, I want an evening suit."

"Yes, I was afraid you would," she said. She was glad. There was a moment or two of silence. "There's that one of William's," she continued, "that I know cost four pounds an' a half which he'd only worn three times."

"Should you like me to wear it, mother?" he asked.

"Yes. I think it would fit you—at least the coat. The trousers would want shortening."

He went upstairs and put on the coat and vest. Coming down, he looked strange in a formal collar and a formal shirt-front, with an evening coat and vest. It was rather large.

"The tailor can make it right," she said, smoothing her hand over his shoulder. "It's beautiful stuff. I never could find in my heart to let your father wear the trousers, and very glad I am now."

And as she smoothed her hand over the silk collar she thought of her eldest son. But this one was living enough made the clothes. She passed her hand down his back to feel him. He was alive and hard. The other was dead.

He went out to dinner several times in his evening suit that had been William's. Each time his mother's heart was full with pride and joy. He was married now. The seeds she and the children had brought for William were in his shirt-front; he wore one of William's dress shirts. But he had an elegant figure. His face was strong, but warm-looking and rather pleasing. He did not look particularly a gentleman, but she thought he looked quite a man.

He told her everything that took place, everything that was said. It was as if she had been there. And he was dying to introduce her to these new friends who had dinner at seven-thirty in the evening.

"Go along with you!" she said. "What do they want to know me for?"

"They do!" he cried indignantly. "If they want to know me—and they say they do—when they want to know you, because you are quite as clever as I am."

"Go along with you, child!" she laughed.

But she began to spare her hands. They, too, were work-worn now. The day was shiny with so much hot water, the backings rather greasy. But she began to be careful to keep them out of soda. She regretted what they had been—so small and

expensive. And when Anna started on her having more stylish dresses to suit her age, she whopped. She even went as far as to allow a black velvet bow to be placed on her hair. Then she smiled in her nervous manner, and was sent she looked a sight. But she looked a lady, Paul declared, as much as Mrs. Major Morton, and far, far more. The family was coming on. Only Mabel remained unchanged, or rather, looked slowly.

Paul and his mother now had long discussions about life. Religion was fading into the background. He had shovelled away all the rubbish that would hamper him, had cleared the ground, and came more or less to the bedrock of belief that one should feel inside content for right and wrong, and should have the patience to gradually realize one's God. Now life interested him more.

"You know," he said to his mother, "I don't want to belong to the well-to-do middle class. I like my common people best. I belong to the common people."

"But if anyone else said so, my son, wouldn't you be in a town. I'm sure you consider yourself equal to any gentleman."

"In myself," he answered, "not in my class or my education or my manners. But in myself I am."

"Very well, then. Then why talk about the common people?"

"Because—the difference between people isn't in their class, but in themselves. Only from the middle classes one gets ideas, and from the common people—life itself, warmth. You find their hearts and lives."

"It's all very well, my boy. But, then, why don't you go and talk to your father's pals?"

"But they're rather different."

"Not so all. They're the common people. After all, whom do you ride with now—among the common people? Those that exchange ideas, like the middle classes. The rest don't interest you."

"But—there's the life—"

"I don't believe there's a lot more life from Minton than you could get from any educated gal—say Miss Morton. Is it you who are snobbish about class?"

She finally managed him to climb into the middle class, a thing not very difficult, she knew. And she urged him to the end to marry a lady.

Now she began to consider him in his mother's clothing. He still kept up his connection with Minton, could neither break free nor go the whole length of engagement. And this indecision seemed to bleed him of his energy. Moreover, he seemed suspected him of an unrequited leaning towards Clara, and, once the letter

was a married woman, she wished he would fall in love with one of the girls in a better station of life. But he was stupid, and would refuse to love or even to admire a girl much, just because she was his social superior.

"My boy," said his mother to him, "all your愁烦s, your travelling away from old things, and taking life in your own hands, don't seem to bring you much happiness."

"What is happiness?" he asked. "Is nothing to me! How can I be happy?"

The plump question disturbed her.

"That's for you to judge, my lad. But if you could meet some good woman who would make you happy—would you begin to think of settling your life—when you have the means—so that you could work without all this fretting—it would be much better for you."

He frowned. His mother caught him on the arm off his wound of Miriam. He pushed the tumbled hair off his forehead, his eyes full of pain and fire.

"You mean marry, mother," he cried. "That's a woman's whole destiny for life—man of soul and physical comfort. And I do despise it."

"Oh, do you?" replied his mother. "And do you call yours a divine discontent?"

"Yes. I don't care about its divinity. But damn your happiness! So long as life's full, it doesn't matter whether it's happy or not. I'm afraid your happiness would bore me."

"You never give it a chance," she said. Then suddenly all her passion of grief over him broke out. "But it does matter!" she cried. "And you ought to be happy, you ought to try to be happy, to live to be happy. How could I bear to think your life wouldn't be a happy one?"

"Your own's been bad enough, mother, but it hasn't left you so much worse off than the folk who've been happier. I reckon you've done well. And I am the same. Aren't I well enough off?"

"You're not, my son. Badder—badder—and sadder. It's about all you do, as far as I can see."

"But why not, my dear? I tell you it's the best——"

"It isn't. And one ought to be happy, one ought."

By this time Miss Mabel was travelling violently. Struggles of this kind often took place between her and her son, when she seemed to fight for his very life against his own will to die. He took her in his arms. She was ill and pitiful.

"Never mind, Larkie," he murmured. "So long as you don't feel life's poetry and a miserable business, the rest doesn't matter, happiness or unhappiness."

She pressed him to her.

"But I want you to be happy," she said pathetically.

"Ah, my dear—say rather you want me to live."

Mrs. Mooré told us if her heart would break for him. At this man she knew he would not live. He had that poignant consciousness about himself, his own suffering, his own life, which is a form of slow suicide. It almost broke her heart. With all the passion of her strong nature she hated Miriam for having in this subtle way undermined his joy. It did not matter to her that Miriam could not help it. Miriam did it, and she hated her.

She wished so much he would fall in love with a girl equal to be his mate—educated and strong. But he would not look at anybody above him in station. He seemed to like Mrs. Davis. At any rate that feeling was wholesome. His mother prayed and prayed for him, that he might not be wasted. That was all her prayer—not for his wealth or his righteousness, but that he might not be wasted. And while he slept, his hours and hours she thought and prayed for him.

He drifted away from Miriam imperceptibly, without knowing he was going. Arthur only left the way to be married. The baby was born six weeks after his wedding. Mrs. Mooré got him a job under the firm again, at twenty-one shillings a week. She furnished for him, with the help of Beatrice's modest, a little cottage of two rooms. He was caught now. It did not matter how he liked and struggled, he was lost. For a time he chafed, was erratic with his young wife, who loved him, he was almost distracted when the baby, which was delicate, cried or gave trouble. He grumbled for hours to his mother. She only said, "Well, my lad, you did it yourself, now you must make the best of it." And then the cry came out of him. He buckled to work, undertook his responsibilities, acknowledged that he belonged to his wife and child, and did make a good boy of it. He had never been very closely imbued into the family. Now he was gone altogether.

The months went slowly along. Paul had more or less got into connection with the Socialists, Suffragettes, Unionist people in Nottingham, owing to his acquaintance with Clara. One day a friend of his and of Clara's, in Burtonwood, asked him to take a message to Mrs. Davis. He went in the evening across Suttons Market to Elizabeth Hill. He found the house in a mean little street paved with granite cobble and having casements of dark blue, painted bricks. The front door went up a step from off this rough pavement, where the feet of passers-by scraped and clattered. The brown paint on the door was so old that the naked wood showed between the runs. Its mood on the street below and

headed. There came a heavy footstep; a large, stout woman of about sixty towered above him. He looked up at her from the pavement. She had a rather severe face.

She advanced from into the passage, which opened on to the street. It was a small, stuffy, deficient room, of cubanquary, and dimly embellishments of photographs of departed people done in carbon. Mrs. Radford told him. She was staidly, almost martial. In a moment Clara appeared. She flushed deeply, and he was covered with confusion. It seemed as if she did not like being discovered in her home circumstances.

"I thought it couldn't be your room," she said.

But she might as well be being like a sheep as for a lamb. She looked her out of the immensity of a passage into the kitchen.

There was a little, dainty room too, but it was smothered in white lace. The mother had seated herself again by the cupboard, and was drawing thread from a vast web of lace. A clump of half and scuffed cotton was at her right hand, a heap of three-quarter-inch lace lay on her left, while in front of her was the mountain of the lace web, piling the hearthrug. Thousands of early cotton, pulled out from between the lengths of lace, strewn over the floor and the fireplace. Paul dared not go forward, for fear of treading on piles of white stuff.

On the table was a Jenny for carding the lace. There was a pack of brown cardboard squares, a pack of cards of lace, a little box of pins, and on the table lay a heap of drawn lace.

The room was all lace, and it was so dark and warm that the white, snowy stuff seemed the more distant.

"If you're coming in you won't have to mind the work," said Mrs. Radford. "I know we're about blacked up. But sit you down."

Clara, much embarrassed, gave him a chair against the wall opposite the white heaps. Then she herself took her place on the sofa, shamefully.

"Will you drink a bottle of stout?" Mrs. Radford asked.

"Clara, get him a bottle of stout."

He protested, but Mrs. Radford insisted.

"You look as if you could do with it," she said. "Haven't you never any more colour than that?"

"It's only a thick skin I've got that doesn't show the blood through," he answered.

Clara, ashamed and chastised, brought him a bottle of stout and a glass. He poured out some of the black stuff.

"Well," he said, lifting the glass, "here's health!"

"And thank you," said Mrs. Radford.



He took a drink of stout.

"And light yourself a cigarette, as long as you don't set the house on fire," said Mrs. Radford.

"Thank you," he replied.

"Now, you needn't thank me," she answered. "I'll be glad to pass a bit of smoke to the 'ouse again. A house of women is as dead as a house wot no fire, so my thinking' I'm not a sinner as like a candle to myself. I like a man about, if he's only something to keep at."

Clara began to work. Her jersey spun with a subdued hum; the white lace dropped from between her fingers on to the card. It was filled, she snipped off the length, and passed the reel down to the bearded lion. Then she put a new card in her jersey. Paul watched her. She sat square and magnificent. Her throat and arms were bare. The blood still mounted below her ears; she bent her head in shame of her beauty. Her face was set on her work. Her arms were creamy and full of life beside the white lace; her large, well-kept hands worked with a balanced movement, as if nothing would hurry them. He, not knowing, watched her all the time. He saw the arch of her neck from the shoulder, as she bent her head; he saw the coil of dark hair; he watched her moving, gleaming arms.

"I've heard a bit about you from Clara," continued the mother.

"You're in Jordan's, aren't you?" She drew her lace unceasing.

"Yes."

"Ay, well, and I can remember when Thomas Jordan used to ask us for one of my toffies."

"Did he?" laughed Paul. "And did he get it?"

"Sometimes he did, sometimes he didn't—which was latterly. For he's the sort that takes all and gives enough, he is—or used to be."

"I think he's very decent," said Paul.

"Yes; well, I'm glad to hear it."

Mrs. Radford looked across at him steadily. There was something determined about her that he liked. Her face was falling loose, but her eyes were calm, and there was something strong in her that made it seem she was not old, mostly her wrinkles and loose cheeks were an anachronism. She had the strength and sagacity of a woman in the prime of life. She continued drawing the lace with slow, dignified movements. The lig web came up inevitably over her upon; the length of lace fell away at her side. Her arms were fleshy shapes, but glossy and yellow as old ivory. They had not the powder dull gleam that made Clara's so fascinating to him.

"And you've been going with Marian Leeson?" the mother asked him.

"Well——" he answered.

"You, that's a nice girl," she continued. "She's very nice, but she's a bit too much into that world to suit my fancy."

"She is a bit like that," he agreed.

"She'll never be satisfied till she's got wings and can fly over everybody's head, she won't," she said.

Clara looks on, and he told her his message. She spoke bitterly to him. He had supposed her to be dead. To have her humble made him feel as if he were lifting his head in expectation.

"Do you like jorjaping?" he asked.

"What can a woman do?" she replied bitterly.

"Is it revealed?"

"More or less. Isn't all woman's work? That's another trick the men have played, once we force ourselves into the labour market."

"Now then, you shut up about the men," said her mother. "If the woman wasn't foolish, the men wouldn't be had one, that's what I say. No man was ever that bad to/ one but what he got it back again. Not but what they're a lousy lot, there's no denying it."

"But they're all right really, aren't they?" he asked.

"Well, they're a bit different from women," she answered.

"Would you care to be back at Jordan's?" he asked Clara.

"I don't think so," she replied.

"You, she would!" cried her mother, "thank her stars if she could get back. Don't you listen to her. She's the only one that 'igh knows of here, an' it's back's that thin an' starved it'll cut her if two one of these days."

Clara suffered badly from her mother. Paul felt as if his eyes were coming very wide open. What's he to take Clara's filial devotion so seriously, after all? She spun steadily at her work. He experienced a thrill of joy, thinking she might need his help. She seemed dazed and deprived of so much. And her arms moved mechanically, that should never have been subjected to a man's hand, and her hand was bowed to the lace, that never should have been bowed. She seemed to be wrangled about among the refuse that life has thrown away, doing her jorjaping. It was a bitter thing to her to be just made by life, as if it had no use for her. No wonder she protested.

She came with him to the door. He stood below in the main street, looking up at her. So first she was in her stature and her bearing, she reminded him of Jane Iscambard. As she stood in the doorway, she seemed from the street, from her surroundings

"And you will go with Mrs. Hodgkinson to Hartford?"

He was talking quite meaningfully, only watching her. Her gray eyes at last met his. They looked deeply with humiliation, pleading with a kind of suppliant misery. He was shaken and at a loss. He had thought her high and mighty.

What he felt her, he wanted to see. He went to the station in a sort of dream, and was at home without realising he had moved out of her street.

He had an idea that Susan, the owner of the special girl, was about to be married. He asked her the next day.

"I say, Susan, I heard a whisper of your getting married. What about it?"

Susan flushed red.

"Who's been talking to you?" she replied.

"Nobody. I merely heard a whisper that you were thinking——"

"Well, I say, though you couldn't tell anybody. What's more, I wish I wasn't!"

"May, Susan, you won't make me believe that."

"Shan't I? You can believe it, though. I'd rather stop here a devoted spinster."

Paul was perturbed.

"Why, Susan?"

The girl's colour was high, and her eyes flashed.

"That's why!"

"And must you?"

For answer, she looked at him. There was about him a candour and gentleness which made the women trust him. He understood.

"Ah, I'm sorry," he said.

Tears came to her eyes.

"But you'll see it'll turn out all right. You'll make the best of it," he continued rather weakly.

"There's nothing else for it."

"Yes, there's making the worst of it. Try and make it all right."

His eyes made occasion to call again on Clara.

"Would you," he said, "care to come back to Jordan's?"

She put down her work, laid her beautiful arms on the table, and looked at him the same moment without answering. Gradually the flesh mounted her cheek.

"Why?" she asked.

Paul felt rather awkward.

"Well, because Susan is thinking of leaving," he said.

Clara went on with her journey. The white lace layed its little puffs and bows on to the card. He waited for her. Without raising her head, she sat at last, in a peculiar low voice.

"Have you said anything about it?"

"Except to you, not a word."

There was again a long silence.

"I will apply where the advertisement is put," she said.

"You will apply before that. I will let you know exactly when."

She went on spinning her little machine, and did not contradict him.

Clara came to Jordan's. Some of the older hands, Fanny among them, remembered her mother rule, and cordially disliked the younger. Clara had always been "dry," reserved, and egotistic. She had never mixed with the girls as one of themselves. If she had wanted to find fault, she did it coolly and with perfect politeness, which the delinquent felt to be a bigger insult than criticism. Towards Fanny, the poet, overstrung handiwork, Clara was unobtrusively compassionate and gentle, as a result of which Fanny shed more bitter tears than over the rough tongue of the other women had caused her.

There was something in Clara that Paul disliked, and much that pleased him. If she were absent, he always watched her strong throat in her neck, upon which the blonde hair grew low and fluffy. There was a fine down, almost invisible, upon the skin of her face and arms, and when once he had perceived it, he saw it always.

When he was at his work, passing in the afternoon, she would come and stand near to him, perfectly motionless. Then he left her, though she neither spoke nor touched him. Although she stood a yard away he felt as if he were in contact with her. Then he could point no more. He hung down the brush, and turned to talk to her.

Sometimes she praised his work; sometimes she was critical and cold.

"You are affected in that place," she would say; and, as there was an element of truth in her condemnation, his blood boiled with anger.

Again. "What of this?" he would ask enthusiastically.

"What?" She made a small doubtful sound. "It doesn't interest me much."

"Because you don't understand it," he retorted.

"Then why ask me about it?"

"Because I thought you would understand."

She would shrug her shoulders in scorn of his work. She admonished him. He was furious. Then he abused her, and went into passionate exposition of his craft. This amused and stimulated her. But she never owned that she had been wrong.

During the ten years that she had belonged to the women's

movement she had acquired a fair amount of education, and, having had some of Miron's passion to be interested, had taught herself French, and could read in that language with a struggle. She considered herself as a woman apart, and particularly apart from her class. The girls in the spinal department were all of good homes. It was a small, special industry, and had a certain distinction. There was an air of refinement in both rooms. But Clara was aloof from her fellow-workers.

None of these things, however, did she reveal to Paul. She was not the one to give herself away. There was a sense of mystery about her. She was so reserved, he felt she had much to reserve. Her history was open on the surface, but as inner meaning was hidden from everybody. It was enigma. And then sometimes he caught her looking at him from under her brows with an almost fierce, silent warning, which made him move quickly. Once she met his eyes. But then her own were, as it were, covered over, revealing nothing. She gave him a look, however subtle. She was so fast intuitively perceptive, because of the knowledge she seemed to possess, and gathered fruit of experience he could not attain.

One day he picked up a copy of *Levier de sine Miron* from her work-bench.

"You read French, do you?" he asked.

Clara glanced round negligently. She was making an elastic stocking of hosiery with silk, turning the spiral machine with slow, balanced regularity, occasionally bending down to see her work or to adjust the needles; then her magnificent neck, with its down and fine pencils of hair, those white against the lavender, harnessed silk. She turned a few more rounds, and stopped.

"What did you say?" she asked, smiling sweetly.

Paul's eyes glared at her insolent indifference to him.

"I did not know you read French," he said, very polite.

"Did you not?" she replied, with a faint, sarcastic smile.

"Kismet, kismet!" he said, but scarcely loud enough to be heard.

He shut his mouth angrily as he watched her. She seemed to scorn the work she mechanically produced; yet she knew she made were as nearly perfect as possible.

"You don't like spiral work," he said.

"Oh, well, all work is work," she answered, as if she knew all about it.

He marvelled at her attitude. He had to do everything body. She must be something special.

"What would you prefer to do?" he asked.

She laughed at him indulgently, as she made  
off.

"There is no little likelihood of my ever being given a choice that I haven't wanted time considerably."

"Fah!" he said, contemptuous on his side now. "You only say that because you're too good to own up what you want and can't get."

"You know me very well," she replied coldly.

"I know you think you're terrific great choice, and that you live under the eternal threat of working in a factory."

He was very angry and very male. She merely turned away from him in disdain. He walked whirling down the room, flared and laughed with Hilda.

Later on he said to himself:

"What was I so impatient to Clara for?" He was rather annoyed with himself, at the same time glad. "Serve her right; she works with about grade," he said to himself angrily.

In the afternoon he came down. There was a certain weight on his heart which he wanted to remove. He thought to do it by offering her chocolate.

"Have one?" he said. "I bought a handful to sweeten me up."

To his great relief, she accepted. He sat on the work-bench beside her machine, twisting a piece of silk round his finger. She loved him for his quick, unexpected movements, like a young animal. His feet swung as he pondered. The sewing lay across on the bench. She bent over her machine, grinding rhythmically, then stopping to see the stocking that hung beneath, pulled down by the weight. He watched the handsome crumpling of her back, and the apron-strings cutting on the floor.

"There is always about you," he said, "a sort of waiting. Whether or I see you doing, you're not really there: you are waiting—like Pandora when she did her weaving." He could not help a quiver of wickedness. "I'll call you Pandora," he said.

"Would it make any difference?" she said, carefully removing one of her needles.

"That doesn't matter, so long as it pleases me. Have, I say, you come to forget I'm your boss. Is just occurs to me."

"And what does that mean?" she asked coolly.

"It means I've got a right to boss you."

"Is there anything you want so completely about?"

"Oh, I say, you couldn't be surer," he said angrily.

"I don't know what you want," she said, continuing her task.

"I want you to treat me nicely and respectfully."

"Call you 'sir,' perhaps?" she asked quietly.

"Yes, call me 'sir.' I should love it."

"Then I wish you would go upstairs, do."

His mouth closed, and a frown came on his face. He jumped suddenly down.

"You're not himself superior for anything," he said.

And he went away to the other girls. He felt he was being superior than he had any need to be. In fact, he doubted slightly that was he showing off. But if he were, then he would. Clara heard him laughing, in a way she hated, with the girls down the street now.

When at evening he went through the department after the girls had gone, he saw his associates lying untouched in front of Clara's machine. He left them. In the morning they were still there, and Clara was at work. Later on Monday, a little later on they called Fanny, called to him:

"Hey, haven't you got a chocolate for anybody?"

"Sorry, Fanny," he replied. "I meant to have offered them; does it want and forget 'em."

"I think you did," she answered.

"I'll bring you some this afternoon. You don't want them after day've been lying about, do you?"

"Oh, I'm not particular," smiled Fanny.

"Oh, no," he said. "They'll be dirty."

He went up to Clara's bench.

"Sorry I left these things lying about," he said.

She flushed scarlet. He gathered them together in his fist.

"They'll be dirty now," he said. "You should have taken them. I wonder why you didn't. I meant to have told you I wanted you to."

He flung them out of the window into the yard below. He just glanced at her. She glanced from his eyes.

In the afternoon he brought another packet.

"Will you take some?" he said, offering them first to Clara.

"These are fresh."

She accepted one, and put it on to the bench.

"Oh, take several—for luck," he said.

She took a couple more, and put them on the bench also. Then she turned in confusion to her work. He went on up the room.

"Here you are, Fanny," he cried. "Don't be greedy!"

"Are they all for her?" cried the others, making up.

"Of course they're not," he said.

The girls clamoured round. Fanny drew back from her mate.

"Canst not?" she cried. "I can have five pinks, can't I, Paul?"

"Be nice with 'em," he said, and went away.

"You are a dave," the girls cried.

"Temptress," he screamed.

He went past Clara without speaking. She felt the three chocolate crosses would burn her if she touched them. It needed all her courage to slip them into the pocket of her apron.

The girls looked him and were afraid of him. He was so tall while he was nice, but if he were offended, so distant, rejecting them as if they were only objects, or not more than the objects of threat. And then, if they were tempted, he said quietly: "Do you mind going on with your work," and stood and watched.

When he celebrated his twenty-third birthday, the house was in trouble. Arthur was just going to be married. His mother was not well. His father, getting an old man, and lame from his accident, was given a paltry, poor job. Miriam was an eternal reproach. He felt he owed himself to her, yet could not give himself. The house, moreover, needed his support. He was pulled in all directions. He was not glad it was his birthday. It made him larger.

He got to work at eight o'clock. Most of the clerks had not turned up. The girls were not due till 8.30. As he was changing his coat, he heard a voice behind him say:

"Paul, Paul, I want you."

It was Fanny, the bookbinder, standing at the top of her stairs, her face radiant with a secret. Paul looked at her in astonishment.

"I want you," she said.

He stood, at a loss.

"Come on," she coaxed. "Come on before you begin of the letters."

He went down the half-dark steps into her dry, narrow, "smoking-off" room. Fanny walked before him: her black bodice was short—the white was under her armpits—and her green-black calico skirt seemed very long, as she strode with big strides before the young man, himself so graceful. She went to her seat at the narrow end of the room, where the window opened on to chimney-pots. Paul watched her thin hands and her flat wrists as she anxiously smoothed her white apron, which was spread on the bench in front of her. She hastened.

"You didn't think we'd forget you?" she said, reproachful.

"Why?" he asked. He had forgotten his birthday himself.

"Why," he said. "Why?" Why, both here? She pointed to the calendar, and he saw, surrounding the big black number "11," hundreds of little crosses in black ink.

"Oh, leave for my birthday," he laughed. "How did you know?"

"You, you want to know, don't you?" Fanny asked, happily.



delighted. "There's not been everybody—except Lady Clara—and not even some. But I don't tell you *how many I put!*"

"Oh, I know, you're generous," he said.

"There you are, wrong!" she cried indignantly. "I could never be so selfish!" Her voice was strong and generous.

"You almost pretend to be such a hard-hearted hussy," he laughed. "And you know you're so sentimental—"

"I'd rather be called sentimental than *hussy* most," Fanny blurted. Paul knew she referred to Clara, and he smiled.

"Do you say such nasty things about me?" he laughed.

"No, my duck," the household woman answered, lovingly tender. She was sympathetic. "No, my duck, because you don't think yourself a fine figure in marble and as nothing but dirt. I'm as good as you, aren't I, Paul?" and the question delighted her.

"Why, we're not better than one another, are we?" he replied.

"But I'm as good as you, aren't I, Paul?" she persisted coaxingly.

"Of course you are. If it comes to goodness, you're better."

She was rather afraid of the situation. She might get hysterical.

"I thought I'd get here before the others—won't they say I'm deep! Now shut your eyes—"

"And open your mouth, and see what God sends you," he continued, raising voice to words, and expecting a place of elsewhere. He heard the murmur of the organ, and a faint clink of metal. "I'm going to look," he said.

He opened his eyes. Fanny, her long cheeks flushed, her blue eyes shining, was gazing at him. There was a little bundle of paint-tubes on the bench before him. He turned pale.

"No, Fanny," he said quietly.

"From us all," she answered heavily.

"No, but—"

"Are they the right sort?" she asked, looking herself with delight.

"Just! they're the best in the catalogue."

"But they're the right sort?" she cried.

"They're off the list; but I'd made to get when my shop came in." He hit his lip.

Fanny was overcome with emotion. She must turn the conversation.

"They was all on them to do it; they all paid their share, all except the Queen of Sheba."

The Queen of Sheba was Clara.

"And wouldn't she join?" Paul asked.

"She didn't get the chance; we never told her; we weren't going to have her looking at the show. We didn't want her to join."

Paul laughed at the woman. He was much moved. At last he must go. She was very close to him. Suddenly she flung her arms round his neck and kissed him vehemently.

"I can give you a kiss to-day," she said apologetically. "You've looked so white, it's made my heart ache."

Paul kissed her, and left her. Her arms were so gently round him that his heart ached also.

That day he met Clara as he ran downstairs to wash his hands at dinner-time.

"You have stayed so dinner!" he exclaimed. It was unusual for her.

"Yes; and I seem to have dined on old surgical-appliances made. I must go out now, or I shall feel safe under-rubber right through."

She laughed. He instantly caught her wrist.

"You are going anywhere?" he asked.

They went together up to the Castle. Outdoors she dressed very plainly, drove to upstairs; indoors she always looked nice. She walked with hesitating steps alongside Paul, bowing and nodding away from him. Dandy in dress, and drooping, she showed to great disadvantage. He could scarcely recognize her strong form, that seemed to slumber with power. She appeared almost insignificant, dwarfing her stature in her wrap, as she shrunk from the public gaze.

The Castle grounds were very green and fresh. Climbing the precipitous ascent, he laughed and chattered, but she was silent, sitting as brood over something. There was scarcely time to go within the square, square building that crowns the bluff of rock. They leaned upon the wall where the cliff runs sheer down to the Park. Below them, in their holes in the masonry, pigeons preened themselves and cooed wildly. Away down upon the landscape at the foot of the rock, tiny trees stood in their own pools of shadow, and tiny people were amusing about in almost hidden apartments.

"You feel as if you could sweep up the folk like tadpoles, and have a handful of them," he said.

She laughed, answering:

"Yes; it is not necessary to get far off in order to see us perfectly. The trees are much more significant."

"Talk only," he said.

She laughed cynically.

Away beyond the landscape the thin stripes of the masts showed upon the railway track, whose margin was crowded with little stacks of timber, beside which smoking big engines flared.

Then the silver string of the canal lay as smooth among the black reeds. Beyond, the dwellings, very dense on the river flat, looked like black, polished burbage, in thick rows and crowded beds, stretching right away, looking now and then by taller plants, right nowhere the river gleamed in a haughty sweep across the country. The steep steep cliffs across the river looked gray. Great stretches of country darkened with trees and faintly brightened with new land, spread towards the haze, where the hills rose blue beyond gray.

"It is comforting," said Mrs. Dawson, "to think the river goes no farther. It is only a little run upon the country yet."

"A little more," said Paul.

She shivered. She looked the town. Looking directly across at the country which was stretching her, her handsome face, pale and harsh, she reminded Paul of one of the slaves, sensual and spiteful.

"But the town's all right," he said. "It's only temporary. This is the cruce, clumsy make-shift we've practiced on, all worked out what the idea is. The town will come all right."

The pagoda in the pockets of rock, among the pebbled bushes, stood considerably. To the left the large church of St. Mary rose into space, to keep close company with the Castle, above the largest rubble of the town. Mrs. Dawson stared tightly at the looked across the country.

"I feel better," she said.

"Thank you," he replied. "Great compliment!"

"Oh, my brother!" she laughed.

"H'ret don't mauling back with the left hand what you gave with the right, and no mistake," he said.

She laughed in amusement at him.

"But what was the matter with you?" he asked. "I know you were brooding something special. I can see the stamp of it on your face yet."

"I think I will not tell you," she said.

"All right, beg is," he answered.

She flinched and bit her lip.

"No," she said, "it was the girls."

"What about 'em?" Paul asked.

"They have been plotting something for a week now, and to-day they were particularly full of it. All alike; they break me with their secrecy."

"Do they?" he asked in concern.

"I should not mind," she went on, in the restless, angry tone, "if they did not thrust it into my face—the fact that they have a secret."

"Just like women," said he.

"It is hateful, their mean gloating," she said intensely.

Paul was silent. He knew what the girls gloated over. He was sorry to be the cause of that sour discussion.

"They can have all the secrets in the world," she went on, brooding bitterly; "but they might refrain from gloating in them, and making you feel more out of it than ever. It is—*it is* almost unbearable."

Paul thought for a few minutes. He was much perturbed.

"I will tell you what it's all about," he said, pale and nervous. "It's my birthday, and they've bought me a fine lot of presents, all the girls. They're jealous of you"—he felt her stiffen coldly at the word "*jealous*"—"merely because I sometimes bring you a book," he added slowly. "But, you see, it's only a trifle. Don't bother about it, will you—because"—he laughed quickly—"well, what would they say if they saw us here now, in spite of their victory?"

She was angry with him for his clumsy reference to their present intimacy. It was almost insulting of him. Yet he was so quiet, she forgot him, although it cost her an effort.

Those two hands lay on the rough stone parapet of the Castle wall. He had inherited from his mother a fineness of mould, so that his hands were small and vigorous. They were large, to match his large limbs, but white and powerful looking. As Paul looked at them he knew her. "She is wanting somebody to take her hands—*for all she is so contemptuous of us*," he said to himself. And he saw nothing but his two hands, so warm and alive, which seemed to live for her. He was brooding now, staring out over the country from under a fawn brow. The hills, increasing diversity of shapes had vanished from the scene; all that remained was a vast, dark matrix of sorrow and tragedy, the same in all the houses and the churches and the people and the hills; they were only hopes differently. And now that the forms seemed to have melted away, there remained the mass from which all the landscape was composed, a dark mass of struggle and pain. The father, the girls, his mother, the hope, uplaid church, the children of the town, merged into one atmosphere—dark, brooding, and painful, every bit.

"Is that two o'clock striking?" Mrs. Dawson said in surprise.

Paul started, and everything going was firm, regained its individuality, its forgetfulness, and its cheerfulness.

They hurried back to work.

When he was in the rush of preparing for the night's post, standing the week up from Fanny's room, which much of brooding, as evening portman came in.

"A hit, Paul Mow!," he exclaimed, handing Paul a package. "A lady's handwriting? Don't let the girls see it."

The gentleman, himself a divorcee, was pleased to make fun of the girls' affection for Paul.

It was a volume of verse with a brief note: "You will allow me to send you this, and to repeat my inclinations. I also sympathize and wish you well.—G. D." Paul flushed hot.

"Good Lord! Mrs. Brown. She can't afford it. Good Lord, who ever'd have thought of!"

He was suddenly intensely moved. He was filled with the warmth of her. In the glow he could almost feel her as if she were present—her arms, her shoulders, her bosom, her throat, feel them, almost contain them.

This glow on the part of Clara brought down long silent lameness. The other girls noticed that when Paul met Mrs. Brown his eyes lifted and gave that peculiar bright greeting which they could interpret. Knowing he was unwise, Clara made no sign, save that occasionally she turned aside her face from him when he came upon her.

They walked out together very often at dinner-time; it was quite open, quite frank. Everybody seemed to feel that he was quite unaware of the state of his own feeling, and that nothing was wrong. He talked to her now with some of the old fervor with which he had talked to Missus, but he cared her about the truth; he did not bother about his conclusions.

One day in October they went out to Lambley for tea. Suddenly they came to a halt on top of the hill. He glanced and out on a gate, the sea on the side. The afternoon was perfectly still, with a dim haze, and yellow daisies glowing through. They were quiet.

"How old were you when you married?" he asked quietly.

"Twenty-two."

Her voice was subdued, almost submissive. She would tell him more.

"It is eight years ago?"

"Yes."

"And when did you leave him?"

"Three years ago."

"Five years? Did you love him when you married him?"

She was silent for some moments; then she said slowly:

"I thought I did—more or less. I didn't think much about it. And he wanted me. I was very grateful then."

"And you sort of walked into it without thinking?"

"Yes. I seemed to have been asleep nearly all my life."

"Surrenderable? But—when did you wake up?"

"I don't know that I ever did, or ever have—since I was a child."

"You went to sleep as you grew to be a woman? How queer! And he didn't wake you?"

"No; he never got there," she replied, in a moment.

The frozen birds dashed over the hedges where the rose-hips stood naked and tawny.

"Go where?" he asked.

"At me. He never really mattered to me."

The afternoon was so gently warm and dim. Red roofs of the cottages loomed among the blue haze. He loved the day. He could feel, but he could not understand, what Clara was saying.

"But why did you leave him? What he owed to you?"

She shuddered lightly.

"He—the sort of degraded man. He wanted to bully me because he hadn't got me. And then I felt as if I wanted to run, as if I was flattered and bound up. And he would sleep."

"I see."

He did not at all see.

"And was he always dirty?" he asked.

"A bit," she replied slowly. "And then he seemed as if he couldn't get at me, really. And then he got brutal—he was brutal."

"And why did you leave him finally?"

"Because—because he was unfaithful to me——"

They were both silent for some time. Her hand lay on the grass-plot as she talked. He put his over it. His heart beat quickly.

"But did you—were you ever—did you ever give him a chance?"

"Chance? How?"

"To come near to you."

"I married him—and I was willing——"

They both strove to keep their voices steady.

"I believe he loves you," he said.

"It looks like it," she replied.

He wanted to take his hand away, and could not. She saved him by running her own. After a silence, he began again:

"Did you leave him out of count all along?"

"He left me," she said.

"And I suppose he couldn't make himself mean everything to you?"

"He tried to bully me into it."

But the conversation had got them both out of their depths. Suddenly Paul jumped down.

"Come on," he said. "Let's go and get some tea."

They found a cottage, where they sat in the cold parlour. She poured out his tea. She was very quiet. He felt she had withdrawn again from him. After tea, she started busily into her room, leaving her wedding ring all the time. In her abstraction she took the ring off her finger, used it up, and spun it upon the table. The gold became a disfigured, glimmering globe. It fell, and the ring was quivering upon the table. She spun it again and again. Paul watched, fascinated.

But she was a married woman, and he believed in simple friendship. And he considered that he was perfectly honourable with regard to her. It was only a friendship between man and woman, such as any civilized persons might have.

He was like so many young men of his own age. Sex had become so complicated to him that he would have denied that he ever could want Clara or Marian or any woman whom he knew. Sex seems to be a sort of detached thing, that did not belong to a woman. He loved Marian with his soul. He grew warm at the thought of Clara, he heated with her, he knew the curves of her breast and shoulders as if they had been moulded inside him; and yet he did not positively desire her. He would have denied it for ever. He believed himself really bound to Marian. If ever he should marry, some time in the far future, it would be his duty to marry Marian. That he gave Clara to understand, and she said nothing, but left him to his cousin. He came to her, Mrs. Drown, whenever he could. Then he wrote frequently to Marian, and visited the girl occasionally. So he went on through the winter, but he seemed not so bound. His mother was angry about him. She thought he was going wacky from Marian.

Marian knew now how strong was the attraction of Clara for him; but still she was certain that the best in him would triumph this feeling for him. Drown—who, moreover, was a married woman—was shallow and temperamental, compared with his love for himself. He would come back to her, she was sure; with some of his young freedom gone, perhaps, but cured of his desire for the better things which other women than herself could give him. She could bear all, if he were sincerely true to her and must come back.

He saw none of the anomaly of his position. Marian was his old friend, lover, and she belonged to Boston and home and his youth. Clara was a newer friend, and she belonged to New York, to life, to the world. It seemed to him quite plain.

Mrs. Drown and he had many periods of estrangement, when they saw little of each other, but they always came together again.

"Were you worried with Master Drown?" he asked her. It was a thing that seemed to trouble him.

"In what way?"

"Oh, I don't know. But wasn't you horrid with him? Didn't you do something that landed him in prison?"

"What, pray?"

"Making him feel as if he were nothing—I know," Paul declared.

"You are so clever, my friend," she said coolly.

The conversation broke off there. But it made her cool with him for some time.

She very rarely saw Miriam now. The friendship between the two women was not broken off, but considerably weakened.

"Will you come in to the concert on Sunday afternoon?" Clara asked him just after Christmas.

"I promised to go up to Walley Farm," he replied.

"Oh, very well."

"You don't mind, do you?" he asked.

"Why should I?" she answered.

Which almost annoyed him.

"You know," he said, "Miriam and I have been a lot to each other ever since I was sixteen—that's seven years now."

"It's a long time," Clara replied.

"Yes, but *watch* her—it doesn't go right——"

"How?" asked Clara.

"She seems to draw me and draw me, and she wouldn't leave a single hair of me free to fall out and blow away—she'd keep it."

"But you like to be kept?"

"No," he said, "I don't. I wish it could be normal, give and take—like me and you. I want a woman to keep me, but not in her pocket!"

"But if you love her, it couldn't be normal, like me and you."

"Yes, I should love her better than. She sort of wants me so much that I can't give myself."

"What's her love?"

"What's the real use of my body. I can't help thinking back from her."

"And yet you love her?"

"No, I don't love her. I never even *had* her."

"Why not?" Clara asked.

"I don't know."

"I suppose you're afraid," she said.

"I'm not. Something is not there from her like hell—don't go good, when I'm not good."

"How do you know what she is?"

"I do! I know she wants a sort of soul union."



"But how do you know what she wants?"

"I've been with her the seven years."

"And you haven't found out the very last thing about her?"

"What's that?"

"That she doesn't want any of your soul commitments. That's your own imagination. She wants you."

He pondered over this. Perhaps he was wrong.

"But she means——" he began.

"You've never tried," she answered.

## *The Text on Miriam*

When the spring came again the old sadness and battle. Now he knew he would have to go to Miriam. But what was his reluctance? He told himself it was only a sort of avenging virginity in her and him which neither could break through. He might have married her; but his circumstances at home made it difficult, and, moreover, he did not want to marry. Marriage was for life, and because they had become close companions, he and she, he did not see that it should inevitably follow they should be man and wife. He did not feel that he wanted marriage with Miriam. He wanted her did. He would have given his hand to have felt a person desire to marry her and to have her. Then why couldn't he bring it off? There was some obstacle, and what was the obstacle? It lay in the physical bondage. He shrank from the physical contact. But why? With her he felt bound up inside himself. He could not go out to her. Something struggled in him, but he could not get to her. Why? She loved him. Clara said she once wanted him; then why couldn't he go to her, make love to her, kiss her? Why, when she put her arm in his, usually, as they walked, did he feel he would burst forth in brutality and revolt? He owed himself to her; he wanted to belong to her. Perhaps the recoil and the shrinking from her was love in its first fierce making-up. He had no aversion for her. No, it was the opposite; it was a strong desire fighting with a still stronger repugnance and virginity. It seemed as if virginity were a positive force, which fought and won in both of them. And with her he felt it so hard to overcome, yet he was nearest to her, and with her alone could he deliberately break through. And he owed himself to her. Then, if they could get things right, they could marry, but he would never marry unless he could feel strong in the joy of a union. He could not have faced his mother. It seemed to him that to sacrifice himself in a marriage he did not want would be degrading, and would undo all his life, make it a nullity. He would try what he could do.

And he had a great tenderness for Miriam. Always, she was sad, demanding her religion; and he was nearly a religion to her. He could not bear to tell her. It would all come right if they tried.

He looked round. A good many of the women here he knew were like himself, bound in by their own virginity, which they could not break out of. They were so sensitive to their women that they would go without them for ever rather than do them a hurt, an injustice. Being the sons of men whose husbands had blundered rather brutally through their feminine susceptibilities, they were themselves no deluders and slips. They could cause deep disappointments than incur any reproach from a woman; for a woman, was like their mothers, and they were full of the sense of their mothers. They preferred themselves to suffer the misery of celibacy, rather than risk the other pain.

He went back to her. Something in her, when he looked at her, brought the tears almost to his eyes. One day he stood behind her as she sang. Annie was playing a song on the piano. As Minnie sang her mouth seemed hopeless. She sang like a soul singing to heaven. It reminded him so much of the mouth and eyes of one who sings beside a Bonaventura Madonna, so spiritual. Again, her answer, came up the pass at him. Why must he ask her for the other thing? Why was there his blood battling with her? If only he could have been always gentle, tender with her, breathing with her the atmosphere of reverie and religious dreams, he would give his right hand. It was not far to hurt her. There seemed an eternal maidenhood about her; and when he thought of her modest, he saw the great brown eyes of a maiden who was nearly seized and shocked out of her virgin maidenhood, but not quite, in spite of her seven children. They had been born almost leaving her out of count, not of her, but upon her. So she could never let them go, because she never had possessed them.

Mrs. Morel saw him going upon impulsively in blitheness, and was astonished. He said nothing to his mother. He did not explain nor excuse himself. If he came home late, and she reproached him, he frowned and turned on her in an overbearing way.

"I shall come home when I like," he said, "I am old enough."

"Must she keep you till the time?"

"It is I who stay," he answered.

"And she too? But very well," she said.

And she went to bed, leaving the door unlocked for him; but she lay listening until he came, often long after. It was a great happiness to her, that he had gone back to Minnie. She recognized, however, the uselessness of any further intercourse. He went to Willey Farm as a man now, not as a youth. She had no right over him. There was a coldness between him and her. He hardly told her anything. Discarded, she waited on him, waited for him still,

and loved to share his life; but her face closed again like a mask. There was nothing for her to do now but the housework, for at the rest he had gone to bed. She could not forgive him. Miriam told her joy and the warmth in him. He had been made a jolly lad, and full of the warmest affections; now he grew colder, more and more irritable and gloomy. It reminded her of William; but Paul was worse. He did things with more energy, and more realization of what he was about. His mother knew how he was suffering for want of a woman, and she saw him going to Miriam. If he had made up his mind, nothing on earth would alter him. Mrs. Moor was tired. She began to give up at last; she had desisted. She was in the way.

He went on determinedly. He realized more or less what his mother felt. It only hardened his will. He made himself callous towards her; but it was like being callous to his own health. It undermined him quickly; yet he persisted.

He lay back in the rocking-chair at Wilby Farm one evening. He had been talking to Miriam for some weeks, but had not come to the point. Now he said suddenly:

"I am twenty-four, almost."

She had been brooding. She looked up at him suddenly in surprise.

"Yes. What makes you say that?"

There was something in the changed atmosphere that she detected.

"Sir Thomas Moor says one can marry at twenty-four."

She laughed gamely, saying:

"Does it need Sir Thomas Moor's sanction?"

"No, but one ought to marry about then."

"Ay," she answered broadly; and she waited.

"I can't marry you," he continued slowly, "not now, because we've no money, and they depend on me at home."

She sat half-gazing what was coming.

"But I want to marry now——"

"You want to marry?" she repeated.

"A woman—you know what I mean."

She was silent.

"Now, at last, I mean," he said.

"Ay," she answered.

"And you love me?"

She laughed loudly.

"Why are you ashamed of it," he softened. "You wouldn't be ashamed before your God, why are you before people?"

"Nay," she answered deeply, "I am not ashamed."

"You are," he replied bitterly, "and it's my fault. But you know I can't help being—as I am—don't you?"

"I know you can't help it," she replied.

"I love you as much for—then there is something about."

"What?" she asked, looking at him.

"Oh, no more. It is I who ought to be ashamed—like a spiritual cripple. And I am ashamed. It is misery. Why is it?"

"I don't know," replied Miriam.

"And I don't know," he repeated. "Don't you think we have been too fierce in our what they call purity? Don't you think that to be so much afraid and nervous is sort of dishonest?"

She looked at him with startled dark eyes.

"You recoiled away from anything of the sort, and I took the emotion from you, and recoiled also, perhaps worse."

There was silence in the room for some time.

"Yes," she said, "it is so."

"There is between us," he said, "all these years of intimacy I feel naked enough before you. Do you understand?"

"I think so," she answered.

"And you love me?"

She laughed.

"Don't be silly," he pleaded.

She looked at him and was sorry for him; his eyes were dark with sorrow. She was sorry for him; it was worse for him to have that deluged love than for herself, who could never be properly treated. He was restless, he ever aching forward and trying to find a way out. He ought to be blind, and have what he liked of her.

"Yes," she replied, "I am not blind."

She felt she could bear anything for him, she would suffer for him. She put her hand on his knee as he leaned forward in his chair. He took it and kissed it; but it hurt to do so. He felt he was putting himself aside. He was then sacrificed to her purity, which felt more like nullity. How could he kiss her hand generously, when it would sting her more, and leave nothing but pain? Yet slowly he drew her to him and kissed her.

They knew each other too well to pretend anything. As she kissed him, she watched his eyes; they were staring across the room, with a peculiar dark bloom on them that fascinated her. He was perfectly still. She could feel his heart throbbing heavily in his breast.

"What are you thinking about?" she asked.

The bloom in his eyes dimmed, became uncertain.

"I was thinking, alike with, I suppose. I have been obstinate."

She took her hand on her breast.

"Yes," she answered.

"That's all," he said, and his voice seemed sore, and his mouth was kissing her throat.

Then she raised her head and looked into his eyes with her full gaze of love. The blood struggled, seemed to try to get away from her, and then was quenched. He turned his head quickly aside. It was a moment of anguish.

"Kiss me," she whispered.

He shut his eyes, and kissed her, and his arms folded her close and close.

When she walked home with him over the fields, he said:

"I am glad I came back to you. I feel so simple with you—of there was nothing to hide. We will be happy."

"Yes," she murmured, and the tears came to her eyes.

"Some sort of purity in our souls," he said, "makes us not want, get away from, the very thing we want. We have to fight against that."

"Yes," she said, and she felt stunned.

As she stood under the drooping thorn-trees, in the darkness by the roadside, he kissed her, and his fingers wandered over her face. In the darkness, where he could not see her but only feel her, his passion flooded him. He clasped her very close.

"Sometimes you will hate me!" he murmured, hiding his face on her shoulder. It was so difficult.

"Not now," she said.

His hopes and his heart sank. A dizziness came over him.

"No," he said.

His clasp of her slackened.

"I love to feel your arms close!" she said, pressing his arm against her back, where it went round her waist. "It rests me so."

He tightened the pressure of his arm upon the small of her back to rest her.

"We belong to each other," he said.

"Yes."

"Then why shouldn't we belong to each other altogether?"

"Yes——" she faltered.

"I know it's a lot to ask," he said, "but there's not much else for you really—not in the Godden way. You can trust me there?"

"Oh, I can trust you." The answer came quick and strong.

"It's not that—it's not that at all—but——"

"What?"

She hid her face in his neck with a little cry of misery.

"I don't know!" she cried.

She seemed slightly hysterical, but with a sort of horror. His heart died in him.

"You don't think it ugly?" he asked.

"No, not now. You have taught me it isn't."

"You are afraid?"

She calmed herself hastily.

"Yes, I am only afraid," she said.

He kissed her tenderly.

"Never mind," he said. "You shall please yourself."

Suddenly she gripped his arm round her, and clenched her body still.

"You shall have me," she said, through her shut teeth.

His heart beat up again like fire. His hands held her close, and his mouth was on her throat. She could not bear it. She drew away. He disengaged her.

"Was't you in love?" she asked greedily.

He sighed, scarcely hearing what she said. She waited, waiting he would go. At last he kissed her quickly and dashed the door. Looking round he saw the pale bloom of her face down in the darkness under the hanging tree. There was no more of her but this pale bloom.

"Good-bye!" she called softly. She had no body, only a voice and a dark face. He turned away and saw down the road, his face detached, and when he came to the wall over the lake he leaned there, almost stunned, looking up the black water.

Miriam plunged home over her meadows. She was not afraid of people, what they might say; but she dreaded the issue with him. Yes, she would let him have her if he insisted; and then, when she thought of it afterwards, her heart went down. He would be disappointed, he would find no satisfaction, and then he would go away. Yet he was so innocent; and over this, which did not seem so all-important to her, was there long to break down. After all, he was only like other men, seeking his satisfaction. Oh, but there was something more in him, something deeper! She could trust to it, in spite of all doubts. He had that potential was a great moment in life. All strong emotions concentrated there. Perhaps it was so. There was something divine in it, then she would submit, religiously, to the sacrifice. He should have her. And at the thought her whole body clenched and convulsively, hard, as if against something, but Life forced her through this pain of suffering, too, and she would submit. At any rate, it would give him what he wanted, which was her deepest wish. She brooded and brooded and brooded herself towards satisfying him.

He courted her now like a lover. Often, when he grew hot,

she put her face from him, held it between her hands, and looked in his eyes. He could not meet her gaze. Her dark eyes, full of love, earnest and searching, made him turn away. Not for an instant would she let him forget. Back again he had to turn—himself into a sense of his responsibility and love. Never any relaxing, never any leaving himself to the great hunger and responsibility of passion; he must be brought back to a difference, reflective creature. As if from a sense of passion she called him back to the difference, the personal relationship. He could not bear it. "Leave me alone! leave me alone!" he wanted to cry; but she wanted him to look at her with eyes full of love. His eyes, full of the dark, imprisoned fire of desire, did not belong to her.

There was a great crop of cherries at the farm. The trees at the back of the house, very large and tall, hung dark with scarlet and crimson drops, under the dark leaves. Paul and Edgar were gathering the fruit one evening. It had been a hot day, and now the clouds were rolling in the sky, dark and warm. Paul climbed high in the tree, above the scarlet roof of the building. The wind, rising steadily, made the whole tree rock with a subtle, thrilling motion that stirred the blood. The young man, perched insecurely in the slender branches, rocked till he felt slightly drunk, reached down the boughs, where the scarlet heads of cherries hung thick underneath, and tore off handful after handful of the dark, cent-sected fruit. Cherries touched his ears and his neck as he stretched forward, their dark finger-tips sending a flush down his blood. All shades of red, from a golden vermilion to a rich crimson, glowed and met his eyes under a darkness of leaves.

The sun, going down, suddenly caught the broken clouds—immense piles of gold flared out in the southwest, heaped in red, glowing yellow right up the sky. The world, till now dark and grey, reflected the gold glow, astonished. Everywhere the trees, and the grass, and the far-off water, seemed roared from the twilight and shining.

Miriam came out wondering.

"Oh!" Paul heard her mellow voice call, "isn't it wonderful?"

He looked down. There was a fine gold glimmer on her face, then looked very red, turned up to him.

"How high you are!" she said.

Beside her, on the chutark leaves, were four dead birds, thieves that had been shot. Paul saw some thirty-metres hanging quite bleached, like skeletons, picked clear of flesh. He looked down again to Miriam.

"Clouds are on fire," he said.

"Beautiful!" she cried.



## THE TREE ON MIRIAM

She seemed so small, so soft, so tender, down there. He threw a handful of cherries at her. She was startled and frightened. He laughed with a low, chuckling sound and poked her. She ran for shelter, picking up some cherries. Two fine red pairs she hung over her ears; then she looked up again.

" Haven't you got enough? " she asked.

" Nearly. It is like being on a ship up here. "

" And how long will you stay? "

" While the sunset lasts. "

She went to the fence and sat down, watching the gold clouds fall in pieces, and go in swarms, one-coloured run towards the darkness. Gold flamed in scarlet, like pain in its extreme brightness. Then the scarlet sank to rose, and rose to crimson, and quickly the pinks went out of the sky. All the world was dark grey. Paul scrambled quickly down with his basket, musing his cherry-stems as he did so.

" They are lovely, " said Miriam, fingering the cherries.

" I've torn my dress, " he answered.

She took the three-cornered rip, saying:

" I shall have to mend it. " It was near the shoulder. She put out her fingers through the tear. " How warm! " she said.

He laughed. There was a new, strange note in his voice, one that made her gasp.

" Shall we stay out? " he said.

" Won't it rain? " she asked.

" No, let us walk a little way. "

They went down the fields and into the thick plantation of fir-trees and pines.

" Shall we go in among the trees? " he asked.

" Do you want to? "

" Yes. "

It was very dark among the firs, and the sharp spines poked her face. She was afraid. Paul was silent and strange.

" I like the darkness, " he said. " I wish it were darker—good, thick darkness. "

He seemed to be almost unaware of her as a person: she was only to him then a woman. She was afraid.

He stood against a pine-tree trunk and took her in his arms. She relinquished herself to him, but it was a sacrifice in which she felt something of horror. This thick-voiced, phlegmatic man was a stranger to her.

Later it began to rain. The pine-trees swayed very strong. Paul lay with his head on the ground, on the dead pine-needles, listening to the sharp hiss of the rain—a steady, keen noise. His ally.

heart was down, very heavy. Now he confessed that she had not been with him all the time, that her soul had stood apart, in a sort of horror. He was physically at her, but no more. Very clumsy in heart, very sad, and very tender, his fingers wandered over her face pathetically. Now again she loved him deeply. He was tender and beautiful.

"The rain?" he said.

"Yes—up it coming on you?"

She put her hands over him, on his hair, on his shoulders, so that if the raindrops fell on him. She loved him dearly. He, as he lay with his face on the dead pale-brown, felt extraordinarily quiet. He did not mind if the raindrops came on him: he would have him and get wet through: he felt as if nothing mattered, as if his being was separated away into the beyond, near and quite lovable. The strange, gentle reaching-out to-day was new to him.

"We must go," said Miriam.

"Yes," he answered, but did not move.

To him now, life seemed a shadow, day a white shadow; night, and death, and willow, and woe, and woe, that seemed like sleep. To be alive, to be aware and intense—that was outside. The highest of all was to melt out into the darkness and away there, identified with the great Being.

"The rain is coming in on us," said Miriam.

He rose, and soothed her,

"It is a pity," he said.

"What?"

"To have to go. I feel so still."

"Still?" she repeated.

"Siller than I have ever been in my life."

He was willing with his hand in hers. She pressed his fingers, feeling a slight fear. Now he seemed beyond her, she had a fear that she should lose him.

"The fire-crens are like prisoners on the darkness: each one only a prisoner."

She was afraid, and said nothing.

"A sort of hush: the whole night wondering and asleep: I suppose that's what we do in death—sleep in wonder."

She had been afraid before of the trees in him: now of the music. She tried beside him in silence. The cren fell with a heavy

"Hush!" on the trees. At last they gained the quiet sleep.

"Let us stay here awhile," he said.

There was a sound of rain everywhere, smothering everything.

"I feel movement and still," he said; "along with everything."

"Ay," she answered pathetically.

He nodded again unconscious of her, though he held her hand close.

"To be rid of our individuality, which is our will, which is our effort—to live effortless, a kind of conscious sleep—that is very beautiful, I think; that is our after-life—our immortality."

"Yes?"

"Yes—and very beautiful to have."

"You don't usually say that."

"No."

In a while they went upstairs. Everybody looked at them curiously. He still kept the quiet, heavy look in his eyes, the softness in his voice. Indistinctly, they all felt him alone.

About this time Miriam's grandmother, who lived in a tiny cottage in Woodlrose, fell ill, and the girl was sent to keep house. It was a beautiful Irish place. The cottage had a big garden in front, with red brick walls, against which the plum-trees were raised. At the back another garden was separated from the fields by a tall old hedge. It was very pretty. Miriam had not much to do, so she found time for her beloved reading, and for writing little unresponsive poems which interested her.

At the holiday-time her grandmother, being better, was chosen to Daisy to stay with her daughter for a day or two. She was a crocheting old lady, and might return the second day or the third; so Miriam stayed alone in the cottage, which she pleased her.

Paul used often to come over, and they had as a rule peaceful and happy times. He did not understand her much; but then on the Monday of the holiday he was to spend a whole day with her.

It was perfect weather. He left his mother, telling her where he was going. She would be alone all the day. It cast a shadow over him; but he had three days that were all his own, when he was going to do as he liked. It was never so much through the morning lanes on his bicycle.

He got to the cottage at about eleven o'clock. Miriam was busy preparing dinner. She looked so perfectly in keeping with the little kitchen, natty and busy. He kissed her and sat down to wait. The room was small and cozy. The sofa was covered all over with a sort of linen in squares of red and pale blue, old, much washed, but pretty. There was a stuffed seat in a case over a corner cupboard. The sunlight came through the leaves of the scented geraniums in the window. She was making a cushion in his honour. It was their cottage for the day, and they were man and wife. He beat the eggs for her and peeled the potatoes. He thought she gave a feeling of home almost like his mother's, and no one could look more beautiful, with her wrinkled cheeks, when she was flustered from the fire.

The dinner was a great success. Like a young husband, in earnest. They talked all the time with unflagging zest. Then he wiped the dishes she had washed, and they went out down the fields. There was a bright little house that ran into a bog at the foot of a very steep bank. Here they wandered, picking still a few more margerites and many big blue dragon-crowns. Then she sat on the bank with her hands full of flowers, mostly golden water-lilies. As she put her face down into the margerites, it was all contrast with a yellow shirt.

"Your face is bright," he said, "like a transfiguration."

She looked at him, questioning. He laughed pleadingly to her, laying his hand on hers. Then he kissed her fingers, then her face.

The world was all steeped in sunshine, and quite still, yet not asleep, but quivering with a kind of expectancy.

"I have never seen anything more beautiful than this," he said. He held her fast all the time.

"And the water singing to itself as it runs—do you love it?"

She looked at him full of love. His eyes were very dark, very bright.

"Don't you think it's a great day?" he asked.

She murmured her assent. She was happy, and he saw it.

"Just our day—just between us," he said.

They lingered a little while. Then they stood up upon the sweet thyme, and he looked down at her tenderly.

"Will you come?" he asked.

They went back to the house, hand-in-hand, as always. The children came straggling down the path to him. He looked at the door, and they had the little house to themselves.

He never forgot seeing her as she lay on the bed, when he was undressing her after. First he saw only her beauty, and was blind with it. She had the most beautiful body he had ever imagined. He stood unable to move or speak, looking at her, his face half smiling with wonder. And then he wanted her, but as he went forward to her, her hands lifted in a little pleading movement, and he looked at her face, and stopped. Her big brown eyes were watching him, still and composed and keenly; she lay as if she had given herself up to sacrifice: there was her body for him; but she look at the back of her eyes, like a creature awaiting consideration, wanted him, and all his blood fell back.

"You are more like what I want!" he asked, as if a cold shadow had come over him.

"Yes, quite now."

She was very quiet, very calm. She only realized that she was doing something for him. He could hardly hear it. She lay to be

sacrificed for him because she loved him so much. And he had sacrificed her. For a second, he wished he were rotten or dead. Then he shut his eyes again to her, and his blood beat back again.

And afterwards he loved her—loved her to the last fibre of his being. He loved her. But he worried, somehow, to say. There was something he could not bear for her sake. He stayed with her all quiet hours at night. As he rode home he felt he was finally released. He was a youth no longer. But why had he the dull pain in his soul? Why did the thought of death, the after-life, seem so sweet and soothing?

He spent the week with Miriam, and wore her out with his passion before it was gone. He had always, almost wilfully, so put her out of count, and not from the least strength of his own feelings. And he could not do it often, and there remained afterwards always the sense of failure and of death. If he really were with her, he had to put aside himself and his desires. What would have been, he had to put her aside.

"When I come to you," he asked her, his eyes dark with pain and shame, "you don't really want me, do you?"

"Ah, yes!" she replied quickly.

He looked at her.

"May," he said.

She began to tremble.

"You see," she said, riding his face and shunting it out against her shoulder—"you see—as we are—how can I get used to you? It would come all right if we were married."

He lifted her head and looked at her.

"You mean, now, it is always too much shock?"

"Yes—now—"

"You are always clenching against me."

She was trembling with agitation.

"You see," she said, "I've not used to the thought—"

"You are lovely," he said.

"But all my life. Mother said to me, 'There is one thing in marriage that is always dreadful, but you have to bear it.' And I believed it."

"And will believe," he said.

"No!" she cried harshly. "I believe, as you do, that loving, even in this way, is the high-water mark of living."

"That doesn't alter the fact that you never meet it."

"No," she said, taking his head in her arms and rocking it despair. "Don't say so! You don't understand." She rocked with pain. "Don't I want your children?"

"But not me."

"How can you say so?" But we must be married in his children—"

"Shall we be married, then?" I want you to have my children

He kissed her hand reverently. She pondered sadly, watched him.

"We are too young," she said at length.

"Twenty-four and twenty-three—"

"Not yet," she pleaded, as she looked toward the doorway

"When you will," he said.

She bowed her head gravely. The loss of hopefulness is what he said these things grieved her deeply. It had always been failure between them. Surely, she acquiesced in what he said.

And after a week of love he said to his mother suddenly on Sunday night, just as they were going to bed:

"I don't go so much to Marian's, mother."

She was surprised, but she would not ask him anything.

"You please yourself," she said.

So he went to bed. But there was a quietness about him which she had wondered at. She almost guessed. She would leave him alone, however. Preoccupations might spoil things. She watched him in his loneliness, wondering where he would end. He was sick, and much too-quiet for him. There was a personal little looking of his brow, such as she had seen when he was a small baby, and which had been gone for many years. Now it was the same again. And she could do nothing for him. He had to go on alone, make his own way.

He continued faithful to Marion. For one day he had loved her utterly. But it never came again. The sense of failure grew stronger. At first it was only a sadness. Then he began to feel he could not go on. He wanted to run, to go abroad, anything. Gradually, he ceased to ask her to have him. Instead of drawing them together, it put them apart. And then he realized, consequently, that it was no good. It was useless trying. It would never be a success between them.

For some months he had seen very little of Clara. They had occasionally walked out for half an hour at dinner-time. But he always reserved himself for Marion. With Clara, however, his heart cleared, and he was gay again. She treated him indulgently, as if he were a child. He thought he did not mind. But deep below the surface it grieved him.

Evermore's friends said:

"What about Clara? I hear nothing of her lately."

"I walked with her about twenty minutes yesterday," he replied.

"And what did she talk about?"

"I don't know. I suppose I did all the fawing—I usually do. I think I was telling her about the strike, and how the women took it."

"Yes."

So he gave the account of himself.

But gradually, without knowing it, the warmth he felt for Clara drew him away from Miriam, for whom he felt responsible, and to whom he felt he belonged. He thought he was being quite faithful to her. It was not easy to estimate exactly the strength and warmth of one's feelings for a woman till they have run away with one.

He began to give more time to his men friends. There was Jump, at the Art School; Swain, who was chemistry demonstrator at the University; Newton, who was teacher; besides Edgar and Miriam's younger brothers. Pleasing work, he sketched and studied with Joseph. He called in the University for Swain, and the two went "down town" together. Having come home in the train with Newton, he called and had a game of billiards with him in the Moon and Stars. When given to Miriam the account of his men friends, he felt quite justified. His mother began to be relieved. He always told her where he had been.

During the summer Clara wore sometimes a dress of soft cotton stuff with loose sleeves. When she lifted her hands, her sleeves fell back, and her beautiful strong arms showed out.

"Half a minute," he said. "Hold your arms still."

He made sketches of her hand and arm, and the drawings contained some of the fascination the real thing had for him. Miriam, who always went scrupulously through his books and papers, saw the drawings.

"I think Clara has such beautiful arms," he said.

"Yes! When did you draw them?"

"On Tuesday, in the work-room. You know, I've got a corner where I can work. Often I can do every single thing they need in the department, before dinner. Then I work for myself in the afternoon, and put out to things at night."

"Yes," she said, turning the leaves of her sketch-book.

Frequently he teased Miriam. He teased her as she leaned forward and peered over his things. He teased her way of persistently setting him up, as if he were an endless psychological museum. When he was with her, he teased her for having got him, and yet not got him, and he teased her. She took all and gave nothing, he said. At least, she gave no living warmth. She was never alive, and giving off life. Looking for her was like looking for something which did not exist. She was only his conscience, not his mate.

He hated her violently, and was more cruel to her. They dragged on till the next summer. He saw more and more of Clara.

At last he spoke. He had been sitting working at home one evening. There was between him and his mother a peculiar condition of people hostile feeling each with each other. Mrs. Morel was wrong on her feet again. He was not going to seek to Missus. Very well, then she would stand aloof till he said something. It had been coming a long time, this bursting of the steam in him, when he would vent back to her. This evening there was between them a peculiar condition of suspense. He worked feverishly and mechanically, so that he could escape from himself. It gave him. Through the open door, sweetly, came the scent of madonnas lilies, almost as if it were prowling abroad. Suddenly he got up and went out of doors.

The beauty of the night made him want to shout. A half-moon, dusky gold, was rising behind the black sycamores at the end of the garden, making the sky dull purple with its glow. Neater, a dim white line of light went across the garden, and the air all round seemed to stir with noise, as if it were alive. He went across the bed of pink, whose loose perfume came sharply across the cooling, heavy scent of the lilies, and stood amongst the white barrier of flowers. They flagged all round, as if they were parting. The scent made him drunk. He went down to the field to watch the moon sink under.

A corncock in the haystack called constantly. The moon did gain quickly downwards, growing more fluted. Behind him the great flowers heaved as if they were calling. And then, like a shock, he caught another perfume, something raw and coarse. Mending round, he found the purple rose, reached their fleshy throats and their dark, grasping hands. At any rate, he had found something. They stood still in the darkness. Their scent was brutal. The moon was melting down upon the crest of the hill. It was gone; all was dark. The corncock called still.

Looking off a pink, he suddenly went indoors.

"Come, my boy," said his mother. "I'm sure it's none you were to bed."

He stood with the pink against his lips.

"I shall break it off with Missus, mother," he said—sadly.

She looked at him over her spectacles. He was staring back at her, unseeing. She met his eyes for a moment, then took off her glasses. He was white. The smile was up in him, dominant. She did not want to see him too closely.

"But I thought——" she began.



"Well," he answered, "I don't love her. I don't want to marry her—as I shall have done."

"But," exclaimed his mother, amazed, "I thought lately you had made up your mind to have her, and so I said nothing."

"I had—I wanted to—but now I don't want. It's no good. I shall break off on Sunday. I ought to, oughtn't I?"

"You have lost. You know I need to long ago."

"I can't help that now—I shall break off on Sunday."

"Well," said his mother, "I think it will be best. But lately I decided you had made up your mind to have her, so I said nothing, and should have said nothing. But I say, as I have always said, I don't think she is suited to you."

"On Sunday I break off," he said, smiling the while. He put the flower in his mouth. Unobserving, he bowed his words, closed them on the blossom slowly, and had a mouthful of pearls. Then he spat into the fire, kissed his mother, and went to bed.

On Sunday he went up to the farm in the early afternoon. He had written Miriam that they would walk over the fields to Hadcroft. His mother was very tender with him. He said nothing, but she saw the effort it was costing. The peculiar air look on his face told her.

"Never mind, my son," she said. "You will be so much better when it is all over."

Faul glanced wofully at his mother in surprise and resentment. He did not want sympathy.

Miriam met him at the farm-road. She was wearing a new dress of figured muslin that had short sleeves. Those short sleeves, and Miriam's brown-stained arms beneath them—such painful, ragged arms—gave him so much pain that they helped to make him cruel. She had made herself look so beautiful and fresh for him. She seemed to blossom for him alone. Every time he looked at her—a mature young woman now, and beautiful in her new dress—it hurt so much that his heart seemed almost to be burning with the resentment he put on it. But he had decided, and it was terrible.

On the hill they sat down, and he lay with his head to her hip, while she fingered her hair. She knew that "he was not there," as she put it. Often, when she had him with her, she looked for him, and could not find him. But this afternoon she was not prepared.

It was nearly five o'clock when he told her. They were sitting on the bank of a stream, where the lip of turf hung over a hollow bank of yellow earth, and he was leaning away with a stick, as he did when he was perturbed and crank.

"I have been thinking," he said, "we ought to break off."

"Why?" she cried in surprise.

"Because it's no good going on."

"Why is it no good?"

"It isn't. I don't want to marry. I don't want ever to marry. And if we're not going to marry, it's no good going on."

"But why do you say this now?"

"Because I've made up my mind."

"And what about those last few months, and the things you told me then?"

"I can't help it; I don't want to go on."

"You don't want any more of me?"

"I want us to break off—you be free of me, I free of you."

"And what about those last months?"

"I don't know. I've not told you anything but what I thought was true."

"Then why are you different now?"

"I'm not—I'm the same—only I know it's no good going on."

"You haven't told me why it's no good."

"Because I don't want to go on—and I don't want to marry."

"How many times have you offered to marry me, and I wouldn't?"

"I know; but I want us to break off."

There was silence for a moment or two, while he dug violently at the earth. She bent her head, pondering. He was an unreasonable child. He was like an infant which, when it has drunk its fill, throws away and smashes the cup. She looked at him, feeling she could get hold of him and bring some consistency out of him. But she was helpless. Then she cried:

"I have said you were only fourteen—you are only *five*!"

He still dug at the earth violently. He heard.

"You are a child of four," she repeated in her anger.

He did not answer, but said in his heart: "All right; if I'm a child of four, what do you want me for? I don't want another mother." But he said nothing to her, and there was silence.

"And have you told your people?" she asked.

"I have told my mother."

There was another long interval of silence.

"Then what do you want?" she asked.

"Why, I want us to separate. We have lived on each other all these years, now let us stop. I will go my own way without you, and you will go your way without me. You will have an independent life of your own then."

There was in it some truth that, in spite of her bitterness, she

could not help registering. She knew she felt in a sort of bondage to him, which she hated because she could not control it. She had hated her love for him from the moment it grew too strong for her. And, deep down, she had hated him because she loved him and he dominated her. She had resisted his domination. She had sought to keep herself free of him in the best sense. And she was free of him, even more than he of her.

"And," he continued, "we shall always be more or less each other's work. You have done a lot for me, I for you. Now let us start and live by ourselves."

"What do you want to do?" she asked.

"Nothing—only be free," he answered.

She, however, knew in her heart that Clara's influence was over him to liberate him. But she said nothing.

"And what have I to tell my mother?" she asked.

"I told my mother," he answered, "that I was breaking off—clean and altogether."

"I shall not tell them at home," she said.

Frowning, "You please yourself," he said.

He knew he had handed her in a nasty hole, and was leaving her in the lurch. It angered him.

"Tell them you wouldn't and won't marry me, and have broken off," he said. "It's true enough."

She bit her finger nervously. She thought over their whole affair. She had known it would come to this; she had seen it all along. It started with her better reputation.

"Always—it has always been so!" she cried. "It has been one long battle between us—you fighting away from me."

It came from her unconscious, like a dash of lightning. The man's heart stood still. Was this how she saw it?

"But we've had some perfect hours, some perfect times, when we were together?" he pleaded.

"Never!" she cried; "never! It has always been you fighting me off."

"Not always—was at first!" he pleaded.

"Always, from the very beginning—always she said!"

She had finished, but she had done enough. He sat tight. He had wanted to say, "It has been good, but it is at an end!" And she—the woman love he had believed in when he had despised himself—declared that their love had ever been love. "He had always fought away from her?" Then it had been monstrous. There had never been anything really between them; all the time he had been imagining something where there was nothing. And she had known. She had known so much, and had said but so

lute. She had known all the time. All the time this was at the bottom of her.

He sat silent in bitterness. At last the whole affair appeared in a cynical aspect to him. She had really played with him, not he with her. She had hidden all her consciousness from him, had flattered him, and deceived him. She despised him now. He grew intellectual and cruel.

"You ought to marry a man who worships you," he said, "then you could do as you liked with him. Fifty of men will worship you, if you get on the private side of their nature. You ought to marry one such. They would never fight you off."

"Thank you," she said. "But don't advise me to marry someone else any more. You've done it before."

"Very well," he said; "I will say no more."

He sat still, feeling as if he had had a blow, instead of giving one. Their eight years of friendship and love, the eight years of his life, were nullified.

"When did you think of this?" she asked.

"I thought definitely on Thursday night."

"I know it was coming," she said.

That pleased him bitterly. "Oh, very well? If she knew that it doesn't come as a surprise to her," he thought.

"And have you said anything to Clara?" she asked.

"No; but I shall tell her now."

There was a silence.

"Do you remember the things you said this time last year, in my grandmother's house—say last month even?"

"Yes," he said; "I do! And I meant them! I can't help that it's failed."

"It has failed because you want something else."

"It would have failed whether or not. I've never believed in me."

She laughed strongly.

He sat in silence. He was full of a feeling that she had deceived him. She had deceived him when he thought she worshipped him. She had let him say wrong things, and had not contradicted him. She had let him fight alone. But it struck at his chance that she had despised him whilst he thought she worshipped him. She should have told him when she found flesh with him. She had not played fair. He hated her. All these years she had treated him as if he were a hero, and thought of him recently as an idiot, a foolish child. Then why had she left the foolish child to his folly? The heart was hard against her.

She sat full of bitterness. She had known—oh, well she had

known! All the time he was away from her she had nursed him up, seen his illnesses, his passions, and his folly. Even she had guarded her soul against him. She was not overthrown, nor penetrated, not even nearly hurt. She had known. Only why, as he sat there, had he not this strange dominance over her? His very movements fascinated her as if she were hypnotized by him. Yet he was despicable, false, inconsistent, and mean. Why the bondage for her? Why was in the movement of his arm aimed for as nothing else in the world could? Why was she bound to him? Why, even now, if he looked at her and commanded her, would she have to obey? She would obey him in his trifling commands. But once he was obeyed, then she had him in her power, she knew, to lead him where she would. She was sure of herself! Only, this new infatuation! Ah, he was not a man! He was a baby that cries for the newest toy. And all the attachment of her soul would not keep him. Very well, he would have to go. But he would come back when he had tired of his new amusements.

He looked at the earth all she was fitted to dwell. She saw He was flinging language of earth in the stream.

"We will go and have tea, then?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered.

They chattered over irrelevant subjects during tea. He held forth on the love of ornament—the cottage parlour moved from there—and its connection with æsthetics. She was cold and quiet. As they walked home, she asked:

"And we shall not see each other?"

"No—no surely," he answered.

"Not write?" she asked, almost mechanically.

"As you will," he answered. "We're not strangers—never should be, whatever happened. I will write to you now and again. You please yourself."

"I see!" she answered calmly.

But he was at that stage at which nothing else hurts. He had made a great cleavage in his life. He had had a great shock when she had told him their love had been always a conflict. Nothing more mattered! If it never had been made, there was no need to make a fuss that it was ended.

He left her at the bus-end. As she went home, solitary, in her new frock, having her people to face at the other end, he stood still with shame and pain in the highway, thinking of the suffering he caused her.

In the reaction towards entering his self-esteem, he went into the Willow Tree for a drink. There were four girls who had been out for the day, drinking a modest glass of port. They had some

chocolate on the table. Paul sat near with his whisky. He noticed the girls whispering and nudging. Presently one, a heavy dark beauty, leaned to him and said:

"Have a chocolate?"

The other laughed loudly at her impudence.

"All right," said Paul. "Give me a hard one—not. I don't like cream."

"Here you are, then," said the girl; "here's an almond for you."

She held the nut between her fingers. He opened his mouth. She popped it in, and blushed.

"You are sure?" he said.

"Well," she answered, "we thought you looked creamier, and they dared me offer you a chocolate."

"I don't mind if I have another—another sort," he said.

And presently they were all laughing together.

It was nine o'clock when he got home, finding dark. He entered the house in silence. His mother, who had been waiting, rose suddenly.

"I told her," he said.

"I'm glad," replied the mother, with great relief.

He hung up his cap wearily.

"I said we'd have done altogether," he said.

"That's right, my son," said the mother. "It's hard for her now, but here in the long run. I know. You weren't treated for her."

He laughed shakily as he sat down.

"I've had such a talk with some girls at a pub," he said.

His mother looked at him. He had forgotten Miriam now. He told her about the girls in the Willow Tree. Miss Morel looked at him. It seemed unreal, his gaudy. At the back of it was too much horror and misery.

"How long some supper," she said very gently.

Afterwards he said wearily:

"She never thought she'd have me, mother, not from the first, and so she's not disappointed."

"I'm afraid," said his mother, "she doesn't give up hopes of you yet."

"No," he said, "perhaps not."

"You'll find it's better to have done," she said.

"I don't know," he said desperately.

"Well, leave her alone," replied his mother.

So he left her, and she was alone. Very few people saved the day, and she for very few people. She remained alone with her old, waiting.

# Pauze

He was gradually making it possible to earn a livelihood by his **H**art Library's had taken several of his painted designs on various stuffs, and he could sell designs for upholstery, for dress-stuffs, and similar things, in one or two places. It was not very much he made at present, but he might extend it. He had also made friends with the designers for a pottery firm, and was gaining some knowledge of his new acquaintance's art. The applied art interested him very much. At the same time he laboured slowly at his pictures. He loved to paint large figures, full of light, but not merely made up of light and cast shadows, like the impressionists; rather definite figures that had a certain human quality, like some of Michael Angelo's people. And these he fitted into a landscape, in what he thought was proportion. He worked a great deal from memory, using everybody he knew. He believed firmly in his work, that it was good and valuable. In spite of fits of depression, shrinking, everything, he believed in his work.

He was twenty-four when he said his first confident thing to his mother.

"Mother," he said, "I'll make a painter that they'll stand up."

She smiled in her quiet fashion. It was like a half-pleased thing of the shuffling.

"Very well, my boy, we'll see," she said.

"You shall see, my pigeon! You see if you're not really one of these days!"

"I'm quite content, my boy," she smiled.

"But you'd have to show. Look at you with Minnie!"

Minnie was the small person, a girl of fourteen.

"And what about Minnie?" asked Mrs. Morel, with dignity.

"I heard her this morning. 'Oh, Mrs. Minnie! I was going to do that,' when you went out in the rain for some coal," he said.

"That looks a lot like your being able to manage servants!"

"Well, it was only the child's excesses," said Mrs. Morel.

"And you springing to her. 'You can't do two things at once, can you?'"

"She was busy washing up," replied Mrs. Morel.

"And what did she say?" "It could very have waited a tin. Now look how your foot puddle!"

"You—how can young laggards!" said Mrs. Morel, smiling.

He looked at his mother, laughing. She was quite serious and rose again with loss of him. It seemed as if all the sunshine were on her for a moment. He continued his work gladly. She seemed so well when she was happy that he forgot her grey hair.

And that year she went with him to the Isle of Wight for a holiday. It was too raining for them both, and so beautiful. Mrs. Morel was full of joy and wonder. But he would have her walk with him more than she was able. She had a bad flaring bout. So grey her face was, so blue her mouth! It was agony to him. He felt as if someone were putting a hold in his chest. Then she was better again, and he forgot. But the anxiety remained inside him, like a wound that did not close.

After leaving Miriam he went almost straight to Clara. On the Monday following the day of the capture he went down to the work-room. She looked up at him and smiled. They had gotten very intimate unconscious. She now a new brightness about him.

"Well, Clara of Shelia!" he said, laughing.

"But why?" she asked.

"I think it suits you. You've got a new look on."

She flushed, asking:

"And what of it?"

"Suits you—awfully! I could design you a dress."

"How would it be?"

He stood in front of her, his eyes glancing as he expounded. He kept her eyes fixed with him. Then suddenly he took hold of her, she half turned back. He drew the stuff of her blouse tighter, smooched it over her breast.

"More so!" he explained.

But they were both of them flaming with Miriam, and immediately he ran away. He had touched her. His whole body was quivering with the emotion.

There was already a sort of secret understanding between them. The next evening he went into the cinematograph with her for a few minutes before nine o'clock. As they sat, he saw her hand lying near him. For some moments he dared not touch it. The pictures danced and dimmed. Then he took her hand in his. It was large and strong. It filled his grasp. He held it fast. She neither moved nor made any sign. When they came out his mind was done. He hesitated.

"Good-night," she said. He darted away across the road.



The next day he came again, talking to her. She was rather together with him.

"Shall we go a walk on Monday?" he asked.

She turned her face aside.

"Shall you tell Mr. Jones?" she asked mechanically.

"I have broken off with her," he said.

"When?"

"Last Sunday."

"You quarrelled?"

"No? I had made up my mind. I told her quite definitely I should consider myself free."

Clara did not answer, and he returned to his work. She was so quiet and so superior!

On the Saturday evening he asked her to come and drink coffee with him in a restaurant, meeting him after work was over. She came, looking very reserved and very distant. He had three-quarters of an hour to train-time.

"We will walk a little while," he said.

She agreed, and they went past the Castle into the Park. He was afraid of her. She walked slowly at his side, with a kind of resentful, reluctant, angry walk. He was almost to take her hand.

"Which way shall we go?" he asked as they walked in darkness.

"I don't mind."

"Then we'll go up the steps."

He suddenly turned round. They had passed the Park steps. She stood still in astonishment at his suddenly abandoning her. He looked for her. She stood aloof. He caught her suddenly in his arms, held her strained for a moment, kissed her. Then let her go.

"Come along," he said, positively.

She followed him. He took her hand and kissed her finger-tips. They went in silence. When they came to the light, he let go her hand. Neither spoke till they reached the station. Then they looked each other in the eyes.

"Goodnight," she said.

And he went for his train. His body acted mechanically. People talked to him. He heard voices around him. He was in a delirium. He felt that he would go mad if Monday did not come at once. On Monday he would see her again. All himself was pitched there, ahead. Sunday intervened. He could not bear it. He could not see her till Monday. And Sunday intervened—hour after hour of tension. He wanted to beat his head against the door of the carriage. But he was stiff. He drank some whiskey on the way home, but it only made it worse. She

mother must not be upset, that was all. He dissembled, and got quickly to bed. There he sat, dreading, with his chin on his knees, staring out at the window at the fire-bell, with its few lights. He neither thought nor slept, but sat perfectly still, musing. And when at last he was so cold that he came to himself, he found his watch had stopped at half-past two. It was after three o'clock. He was exhausted, but still there was the moment of knowing it was only Sunday morning. He went to bed and slept. Then he awoke all day long, till he was fagged-out. And he scarcely knew where he had been. But the day after was Monday. He slept till four o'clock. Then he lay and thought. He was coming nearer to himself—he could see himself, and, somewhere in front. She would go a walk with him in the afternoon. *Afternoon!* It seemed years ahead.

Slowly the hours creaked. His father got up; he heard him pottering about. Then the mirror ran off to the pot, his heavy knees scraping the yard. Clogs were still creaking. A cart went down the road. His mother got up. She knocked the fire. Proudly she called him ruddy. He answered as if he were asleep. That shell of himself did well.

He was waiting to the station—another mile! The train was near Nottingham. Would it stop before the market? But it did not matter. It would get there before dinner-time. He was at Jordan's. She would come in half an hour. At any rate, she would be near. He had done the letters. She would be there. Perhaps she had not come. He ran downstairs. Ah! he saw her through the glass door. Her shoulders stooping a little to her work made him feel he could not go forward; he could not stand. He went in. He was pale, nervous, awkward, and quite cold. Would she understand him? He could not write his real self with this shell.

"And this afternoon," he struggled to say. "You will come?"

"I think so," she replied, murmuring.

He stood before her, unable to say a word. She had her face from him. Again came over him the feeling that he would lose consciousness. He set his teeth and went upstairs. He had done everything correctly yet, and he would do so. All the musing things seemed a long way off, as they do to a man under duress-form. He himself seemed under a tight band of constraint. Then there was his other self, in the chimney, doing things, musing, still in a haze, and he watched that far-off him carefully to see he made no mistake.

But the ache and strain of it could not go on much longer. He worked incessantly. Still it was only twelve o'clock. As if he had

called his clinking against the desk, he stood there and worked, forcing every stroke out of himself. It was a quarter to one, he could clear away. Then he ran downstairs.

"You will meet me at the Fountain at two o'clock," he said.

"I can't be there till half-past."

"Yes!" he said.

She saw his dark, sad eyes.

"I will try at a quarter past."

And he had to be content. He went and got some dinner. All the time he was still under duress, and every minute was stretched out indefinitely. He walked miles of streets. Then he thought he would be late at the meeting-place. He was at the Fountain at five past two. The nature of the next quarter of an hour was refined beyond expression. It was the anguish of combining the thing real with the ideal. Then he saw her. She came! And he was there.

"You are late," he said.

"Only five minutes," she answered.

"I'd never have done it to you," he laughed.

She was in a dark blue costume. He looked at her beautiful figure.

"You want some flowers," he said, going to the nearest flower

She followed him in silence. He brought her a bunch of maries, brick-red carnations. She put them in her coat, thanking.

"That's a fine colour!" he said.

"I'd rather have had something softer," she said.

He laughed.

"Do you feel like a blot of vermillion walking down the street?" he said.

She hung her head, afraid of the people they met. He looked sideways at her as they walked. There was a wonderful close down on her face near the ear that he wanted to touch. And a certain heaviness, the heaviness of a very full ear of corn that dips slightly to the wind, that there was above her, made his brain spin. He seemed to be spurring down the street, everything going round.

As they ran to the fountain, she leaned her heavy shoulder against him, and he took her hand. He felt himself coming round from the anæsthesia, beginning to breathe. Her ear, half hidden among her blonde hair, was near to him. The temptation to kiss it was almost too great. But there were other people on top of the ear. It still remained to him to kiss it. After all, he was not himself, he was some attribute of them, like the machine that fell on her.

He looked quickly away. It had been raining. The big bluff of the Castle rock was streaked with rain, as it roared above the

flat of the town. They crossed the wide, black space of the blackened Railway, and passed the cattle enclosure that stood out white. Then they ran down road to Wilford Road.

She rocked slightly to the train's motion, and as she leaned against him, rocked upon him. He was a vigorous, slender man, with exuberant energy. His face was rough, with rough-haired features, like the common people's, but his eyes under the deep brows were as full of life that they fascinated her. They seemed to dance, and yet they were still, trembling on the finest balance of laughter. His mouth the same was just going to spring into a laugh of triumph, yet did not. There was a sharp suspicion about him. She bit her lip nervously. His hand was hard clamped over hers.

They paid their two halfpennies at the turnstile and crossed the bridge. The Train was very full. It swept silent and motionless under the bridge, travelling in a soft body. There had been a great deal of rain. On the river banks were flat gleams of flood water. The sky was grey, with patches of silver here and there. In Wilford Churchyard the daisies were sodden with rain—wet black-mosses laid. No one was on the path that went along the green river meadow, along the elm-tree colonnade.

There was the distant haze over the silvery-dark water and the green meadow-banks, and the elm-trees that were spangled with gold. The river did lie in a body, steadily silent and swift, intervening among fields like some subtle, complex creature. Clara walked moodily beside him.

"Why," she asked at length, in rather a jarring tone, "did you leave Miriam?"

He frowned.

"Because I wanted to leave her," he said.

"Why?"

"Because I didn't want to go on with her. And I didn't want to marry."

She was silent for a moment. They picked their way down the muddy path. Drops of water fell from the elm-trees.

"You didn't want to marry Miriam, or you didn't want to marry at all?" she asked.

"Both," he answered—"both!"

They had to hurry on to get to the stile, because of the pools of water.

"And what did she say?" Clara asked.

"Miriam? She said I was a baby of four, and that I always had hated her all!"

Clara pondered over this for a time.

"But you have really been going with her for some time?" she asked.

"Yes."

"And now you don't want any more of her?"

"No. I know it's no good."

She pondered again.

"Don't you think you've treated her rather badly?" she asked.

"Yes, I ought to have dropped it years back. But it would have been no good going on. Two wrongs don't make a right."

"How old are you?" Clara asked.

"Twenty-five."

"And I am thirty," she said.

"I know you are."

"I shall be thirty-one—or am I thirty-one?"

"I neither know nor care. What does it matter?"

They were at the entrance to the Grove. The wet, red mud, already sticky with fallen leaves, went up the steep bank between the grass. On either side stood the elm-trees like pillars along a great aisle, arching over and making high up a roof from which the dead leaves fell. All was empty and silent and wet. She stood on top of the ridge, and he held both her hands. Laughing, she looked down into his eyes. Then she leaped. Her breast came against his, he held her, and covered her face with kisses.

They went on up the slippery, steep red path. Presently she released his hand and put it round her waist.

"You press the vein of my arm, holding it so tightly," she said.

They walked along. His finger-tips felt the rocking of her breast. All was silent and deserted. On the left the red wet plough-land showed through the doorways between the elm-trees and their branches. On the right, looking down, they could see the moss-tops of stags growing far beneath them, hear occasionally the gurgle of the river. Sometimes there below they caught glimpses of the fall, soft-sliding Thetis, and of water-mosses dotted with small oads.

"It has scarcely altered since late Keltic Whan used to come," he said.

But he was watching her throat below the ear, where the flesh was lying like the honey-white, and her mouth that parted Alceon-like. She stirred against him as she walked, and his body was like a fast string.

Half-way up the big colonnade of elms, where the Grove rose highest above the river, their forward movement faltered in an oak. He led her across to the grass, under the trees at the edge of the path. The cliff of red earth sloped swiftly down, through trees

and bushes, on the river that glistened and was dark between the foliage. The far-below water-meadows were very green. He and she stood leaning against one another, silent, afraid, their bodies touching all along. There came a quick guggle from the river below.

"Why," he asked at length, "did you leave Baxter Downs?"

She turned to him with a splendid movement. Her mouth was opened like, and her throat, her eyes were half shut; her breast was tilted as if it tilted for him. He flushed with a small laugh, shut his eyes, and was lost in a long, white heat. Her mouth fused with his; their bodies were sealed and unsealed. It was some minutes before they withdrew. They were standing beside the public path.

"Will you go down to the river?" he asked.

She looked at him, leaving herself in his hands. He went over the brink of the declivity and began to climb down.

"It is slippery," he said.

"Never mind," she replied.

The red clay went down almost sheer. He slid, went from one shelf of grass to the next, hanging on to the bushes, making for a little platform at the foot of a tree. There he waited for her, laughing with excitement. Her shoes were clogged with red earth. It was hard for her. He frowned. At last he caught her hand, and she stood beside him. The cliff rose above them and fell away below. Her colour was up, her eyes flared. He looked at the big drop below them.

"It's risky," he said; "or messy, at any rate. Shall we go back?"

"Not for my sake," she said quietly.

"All right. You see, I can't help you; I should only hinder. Give me that little parcel and your gloves. Your poor shoes!"

They stood perched on the face of the declivity, under the tree.

"Well, I'll go again," he said.

Away he went, slipping, staggering, sliding to the next tree, into which he fell with a slam that nearly shook the branch out of him. She came after cautiously, hanging on to the roots and grasses. So they descended, stage by stage, to the river's brink. There, as he slipped, she flung her arms away the path, and the red declivity ran straight into the water. He dug in his heels and brought himself up violently. The string of the parcel broke with a snap; the brown parcel bounded down, leaped into the water, and sailed smoothly away. He hung on to his tree.

"Well, PE he deserved!" he cried crossly. Then he laughed. She was coming ponderously down.

"Hmself!" he warned her. He stood with his back to the tree, waiting. "Come now," he called, spreading his arms.

She let herself run. She caught him, and together they stood watching the dark water sweep at the raw edge of the bank. The parrot had sailed out of sight.

"It doesn't matter," she said.

He held her close and turned her. There was only room for their four feet.

"It's a wonder!" he said. "But there's a rut where a man has been, so if we go on I guess we shall find the path again."

The river did not belated its great volume. On the other bank castles were floating on the darkness deep. The cliff rose high above Paul and Clara on their right hand. They stood against the one in the watery silence.

"Let us try going forward," he said, and they struggled in the red clay along the groove a man's soiled boots had made. They were hot and flushed. Their tormented shoes hung heavy on their legs. At last they found the hidden path. It was littered with rubble from the water, but at any rate it was easier. They changed their boots with relief. His heart was beating thick and fast.

Suddenly, coming on to the bank level, he saw two figures of men standing silent at the water's edge. His heart leaped. They were fishing. He turned and put his hand up warningly to Clara. She hesitated, betrayed her own. The two went on together.

The fishermen turned curiously to watch the two intruders on their privacy and retreats. They had had a fire, but it was nearly out. All kept perfectly still. The men turned again to their fishing, stood over the grey gliding river like statues. Clara went with bowed head, flushing; he was laughing to himself. Directly they passed out of sight behind the willows.

"Now they ought to be drowned," said Paul softly.

Clara did not answer. They sailed forward along a tiny path on the river's lip. Suddenly it vanished. The bank was sheer red solid clay in front of them, sloping straight into the river. He stood and cursed beneath his breath, noting his work.

"It is impossible!" said Clara.

He stood erect, looking round. Just ahead were two men in the stream, covered with quiet. But they were unattainable. The cliff came down like a sloping wall from far above their heads. Behind, not far back, were the fishermen. Across the dark the distant castle led silently in the darkness afternoon. He cowered again deeply under his breath. He gazed up the great steep bank. Was there no hope but to scale back to the hidden path?

"Stop a minute," he said, and, digging his boots sideways into

the steep bank of red clay, he began slowly to ascend. He looked across at every cross-tie. At last he found what he wanted. Two bench-rooms side by side on the hill held a little level on the upper floor between their room. It was littered with damp leaves, but it would do. The fishermen were perhaps sufficiently out of sight. He threw down his ransack and waved to her to come.

She looked to her side. Arriving there, she looked at him heavily, dumbly, and laid her head on his shoulder. He held her fast as he looked round. They were safe enough from all but the snail, lonely ones over the water. He sunk his mouth on her throat, where he felt her heavy pulse beat under his lips. Everything was perfectly still. There was nothing in the afternoon but themselves.

When she arose, he, looking on the ground all the time, saw suddenly sparkling on the black wet bench-room many scarlet crimson petals, like splashed drops of blood, and red, small splashes fell from her bosom, streaming down her dress to her feet.

"Your flowers are crushed," he said.

She looked at him heavily as she put back her hair. Suddenly he put his fingertips on her cheek.

"Why don't look so heavy?" he reproached her.

She smiled sadly, as if she felt alone in herself. He caressed her cheek with his fingers, and kissed her.

"Nap!" he said. "Never thus loathed!"

She gripped his fingers tight, and laughed dumbly. Then she dropped her head. He put the hair back from her brow, stroking her temples, tilting them lightly.

"But the shoulders weevil!" he said softly, pleading.

"No, I don't worry!" she laughed tenderly and resigned.

"Yes, the dose! Dunes that worry," he implored, warning.

"No!" she repeated him, kissing him.

They had a stiff climb to get to the top again. It took them a quarter of an hour. When he got on to the level grass, he threw off his cap, wiped the sweat from his forehead, and sighed.

"Now we're back at the ordinary level," he said.

She sat down, resting, on the raspy grass. Her cheeks were flushed pink. He kissed her, and she gave way to joy.

"And now I'll dress thy bosom and make thee fit for respectable folk," he said.

He knelt at her feet, worked away with a stick and tufts of grass. She put her fingers in his hair, drew his head to her, and kissed it.

"What am I supposed to be doing," he said, looking at her laughing: "cleaning shoes or dithering with love? Answer me that!"



"Just whichever I please," she replied.

"I'm your handkerchief for the time being, and nothing else!" But they resumed looking into each other's eyes and laughing. Then they kissed with little smiling faces.

"T-t-t-t!" he went with his tongue, like his mother. "I tell you, nothing gets done when there's a woman about."

And he returned to his foot-dressing, working softly. She touched his dark hair, and he kissed her fingers. He worked away at her shoes. At last they were quite presentable.

"There you are, you see!" he said. "Aren't I a great hand at restoring you to respectability?" Laid up? There, you look as respectable as *Rastama* herself!"

He dressed his own boots a little, washed his hands in a puddle, and sang. They went on into Clifton village. He was really in love with her, every movement the more, every smile in her gaze, sent a hot flash through him and seemed adorable.

The old lady at whose house they had tea was rather surprised by them.

"I could wish you'd had something of a better day," she said, having round.

"Nay!" he laughed. "We've been saying how nice it is."

The old lady looked at him curiously. There was a peculiar gleam and charm about him. His eyes were dark and laughing. He rubbed his mustache with a glad movement.

"Have you been saying so?" she exclaimed, a light coming in her old eyes.

"Truly!" he laughed.

"Then I'm sure the day's good enough," said the old lady.

She turned about, and did not seem to leave them.

"I don't know whether you'd like some radishes as well," she said to Clara; "but I've got none in the garden—and a cucumber."

Clara flushed. She looked very handsome.

"I should like some radishes," she answered.

And the old lady smiled all gladly.

"If she knew!" Clara said quickly to him.

"Well, she doesn't know; and it shows we're nice to ourselves, in my view. You look quite enough to satisfy an archbishop, and I'm sure I feel handsome—so—if it makes you look nice, and makes folk happy when they have us, and makes us happy—why, we're not cheating them out of much!"

They went on with the meal. When they were going away, the old lady came kindly with them, they dabbled in fall blow, went on home, and specified scarlet and white. She stood before Clara, pleased with herself, saying:

"I don't know whether——" and holding the flowers forward in her old hand.

"Oh, how pretty!" cried Clara, accepting the flowers.

"Shall she have them all?" asked Fred reproachfully of the old woman.

"Yes, she shall have them all," she replied, beaming with joy.

"You have got enough for your share."

"Ah, but I shall suit her to give me one!" he teased.

"Then she does as she pleases," said the old lady, smiling. And she bobbed a little nuptial of delight.

Clara was rather queer and uncomfortable. As they walked along, he said:

"You don't feel criminal, do you?"

She looked at him with startled grey eyes.

"Criminal?" she said. "No."

"But you mean to feel you have done a wrong?"

"No," she said. "I only think, 'If they knew!'"

"If they knew, they'd cease to understand. As it is, they do understand, and they like it. What do they matter? Here, with only the two of us, you don't feel not the least bit wrong, do you?"

He took her by the arm, held her facing him, holding her eyes with his. Something burned him.

"Not sinners, are we?" he said, with an uneasy little frown.

"No," she replied.

He kissed her, laughing.

"You like your little bit of gallantry, I believe," he said. "I believe I've enjoyed it, when she went crawling out of Paradise!"

But there was a certain glow and quiver about her that made him glad. When he was alone in the railway-carriage, he found himself remarkably happy, and the people exceedingly nice, and the night lovely, and everything good.

Miss Morel was sitting reading when he got home. Her health was not good now, and there had come that sorry pallor into her face which he never noticed, and which afterwards he never forgot. She did not mention her own ill-health to him. After all, she thought, it was not much.

"You are late!" she said, looking at him.

His eyes were shining; his throat seemed to glow. He smiled at her.

"Yes, I've been down Chillon Street with Clara."

His mother looked at him again.

"But were't people talk?" she said.

"Why? They know she's a calling-card, and so on. And what if they do talk!"

"Of course, there may be nothing wrong in it," said his mother.  
"But you know what felt me, and if once she gets talked about—"

"Well, I can't help it. Their jaw isn't so altogether important, after all."

"I think you ought to consider her."

"So I do! What can people say?—that we take a walk together; believe you're jealous?"

"You know I should be glad if she weren't a married woman."

"Well, my dear, she has separated from her husband, and talks as placidly; so she's already singled out from the sheep, and, so far as I can see, hasn't much to lose. (Say her husband's coming to her, so what's the worth of nothing? She goes with me—it becomes something. Then she must pay—we both must pay! Folk are so frightened of paying, they'd rather starve and die."

"Very well, my son. We'll see how it will end."

"Very well, my mother. I'll abide by the end."

"We'll see!"

"And she's—she's awfully nice, mother; she is really. You don't know!"

"That's not the same as marrying her."

"It's perhaps better."

There was silence for a while. He wanted to ask his mother something, but was afraid.

"Should you like to know her?" He hesitated.

"Yes," said Mrs. Morel coldly. "I should like to know what she's like."

"But she's nice, mother, she is! And not a bit common!"

"I never supposed she was!"

"But you seem to think she's—not so good as— She's better than ninety-nine folk out of a hundred, I tell you! She's fair, she is! She's fair, she's honest, she's straight! There isn't anything underhand or superior about her. Don't be mean about her!"

Mrs. Morel flushed.

"I am sure I am not mean about her. She may be quite as you say, but—"

"You don't approve," he finished.

"And do you expect me to?" she answered coldly.

"Yes—yes—if you'd anything about you, you'd be glad! Do you want to see her?"

"I said I did."

"Then I'll bring her—shall I bring her here?"

"You please yourself."

"Then I will bring her home—on Sunday—to me. If you think a horrid thing about her, I don't forgive you."

His mother laughed.

"As if it would make any difference!" she said. "He knew he had won."

"Oh, but it does to her, mother, when she's alone! She's such a quaver in her way."

Occasionally he still walked a little way down chapel with Miriam and Edgar. He did not go up to the farm. She, however, was very much the same with him, and he did not feel embarrassed in her presence. One evening she was alone when he accompanied her. They began by talking books; it was their unending topic. Mrs. Morel had said that his and Miriam's affair was like a fire fed on books—if there were no more volumes it would die out. Miriam, for her part, boasted that she could read him like a book, could place her finger any minute on the chapter and the line. He, easily taken in, believed that Miriam knew more about him than anyone else. So it pleased him to talk to her about himself, like the simplest of people. Very soon the conversation drifted to his own doings. It flattered him immensely that he was of such important interest.

"And what have you been doing lately?"

"E—oh, not much! I made a sketch of Betwixt from the garden, that is nearly right at last. It's the handiwork cry."

So they went on. Then she said:

"You've not been out, then, lately?"

"Yes; I went up Clifton Grove on Monday afternoon with Clara."

"It was not very nice weather," said Miriam, "was it?"

"But I wanted to go out, and it was all right. The Treat is all."

"And did you go to Barchin?" she asked.

"No, we had tea in Clifton."

"Did you? That would be nice."

"It was! The jolliest old woman! She gave us several possum dahlias, as pretty as you like."

Miriam bowed her head and brooded. He was quite unconscious of concealing anything from her.

"What made her give them you?" she asked.

He laughed.

"Because she liked us—because we were jolly, I should think."

Miriam put her finger to her mouth.

"Were you late home?" she asked.

At last he answered her twice.

"I caught the green-thump."

"Ha!"

They walked in silence, and he was angry.

"And how is Clara?" asked Miriam.

"Quite all right, I think."

"That's good!" she said, with a tinge of irony. "By the way, what of her husband? One never hears anything of him."

"He's got some other women, and is also quite all right," he replied. "At least, so I think."

"I see—you don't know for certain. Don't you think a position like that is hard on a woman?"

"Rarely hard!"

"It's so unfair!" said Miriam. "The man does as he likes—and"

"Then let the woman also," he said.

"How can she? And if she does, look at her position!"

"What of it?"

"Why, it's impossible! You don't understand what a woman feels—"

"No, I don't. But if a woman's got nothing but her fair fame to feed on, why, it's thin fare, and a doctor would die of it!"

He also understood his moral attitude, at least, and she knew he would act accordingly.

She never asked him anything direct, but she got to know enough.

Another day, when he saw Miriam, the conversation turned to marriage, then to Clara's marriage with Dawen.

"You see," he said, "she never knew the fearful importance of marriage. She thought it was all in the day's march—it would have to come—and Dawen—well, a good many women would have given their necks to get him; so why not him? Then she developed into the *same* woman, and treated him badly, I'll bet my boots."

"And she left him because he didn't understand her?"

"I suppose so. I suppose she had to. It isn't altogether a question of understanding; it's a question of living. With him, she was only half alive, she was not dormant, desolated. And the dormant woman was the *same* woman, and she had to be desolated."

"And what about him?"

"I don't know. I rather think he loves her as much as he can, but he's a fool."

"It was something like your mother and father," said Miriam.

"Yes; but my mother, I believe, got real joy and satisfaction out of my father at first. I believe she had a passion for him,

that's why she stayed with him. After all, they were bound to each other."

"Yes," said Miriam.

"That's what one must love, I think," he continued—"the real, real flame of feeling through another person—once, only once, if it only lasts three months. See, my mother looks as if she'd lost everything that was necessary for her living and developing. There's not a ray bit of a feeling of vitality about her."

"No," said Miriam.

"And with my father, at times, I'm sure she had the real thing. She knows; she has been there. You can feel it about her, and about him, and about hundreds of people you meet every day; and, once it has happened to you, you can go on with anything and ripen."

"What has happened, exactly?" asked Miriam.

"It's so hard to say, but the something big and mature that changes you when you really come together with somebody else. It almost seems to fertilize your soul and make it that you can go on and mature."

"And you think your mother had it with your father?"

"Yes; and at the bottom she feels grateful to him for giving it her, even now, though they are miles apart."

"And you think Clara never had it?"

"I'm sure."

Miriam pondered this. She saw what he was seeking—a sort of baptism of fire in passion, it seemed to her. She realised that he would never be satisfied till he had it. Perhaps it was essential to him, as to some men, to see what can, and afterwards, when he was satisfied, he would not care with ruthlessness any more, but could settle down and give her his life into her hands. Well, then, if he must go, let him go and have his ill—something big and intense, he called it. At any rate, when he had got it, he would not want it—that he said himself; he would want the other thing that she could give him. He would want to be awarded, so that he could work. It seemed to her a bitter thing that he must go, but she could let him go free as free for a glass of whisky, so she could let him go to Clara, as long as it was something that would satisfy a need in him, and leave him free for herself to possess.

"Have you told your mother about Clara?" she asked.

She knew this would be a test of the seriousness of his feeling for the other woman; she knew he was going to Clara for some thing vital, not as a man goes for pleasure to a prostitute, if he told his mother.

"Yes," he said, "and she is coming to see on Sunday."

"To your house?"

"Yes, I want mother to see her."

"Ah!"

There was a silence. Things had gone quicker than she thought. She felt a sudden bitterness that he could leave her so soon and so easily. And was Clara to be accepted by his people, who had been so hostile to herself?

"I may call in as I go to chapel," she said. "It is a long time since I saw Clara."

"Very well," he said, satisfied, and unconsciously angry.

On the Sunday afternoon he went to Kewton to meet Clara at the station. As he stood on the platform he was trying to estimate at himself if he had a permission.

"Do I feel as if she'd come?" he said to himself, and he tried to find out. His heart felt queer and contracted. That seemed like foreboding. Then he said a foreboding she would not come! Then she would not come, and instead of taking her over the field house, as he had imagined, he would have to go alone. The train was late, the afternoon would be wasted, and the evening. He hated her for not coming. Why had she promised, then, if she could not keep her promise? Perhaps she had feared her mother—his mother! was always making plans—but that was no reason why she should miss this particular one. He was angry with her; he was furious.

Suddenly he saw the train crawling, crawling round the corner. Here, then, was the train, but of course she had not come. The green engine passed along the platform, the new afternoon carriage drew up, several doors opened. No; she had not come! No! Yes, ah, there she was! She had a big black hat on! He was at her side in a moment.

"I thought you weren't coming," he said.

She was laughing rather breathlessly as she put out her hand to him; their eyes met. He took her quickly along the platform, talking at a great rate to hide his feeling. She looked beautiful. In her hat were large soft roses, coloured like tarnished gold. Her costume of dark cloth fitted so beautifully over her breast and shoulders. His pride went up as he walked with her. He felt the station people, who knew him, eyed her with awe and admiration.

"I was sure you weren't coming," he laughed shakily.

She laughed in answer, almost with a half cry.

"And I wondered, when I was in the train, what was I should do if you weren't there!" she said.

He caught her hand impulsively, and they went along the

narrow twisted. They took the road into Nantall and over the Redburn House Farm. It was a blue, mild day. Everywhere the brown leaves lay scattered; many scarlet leaves stood upon the bridge beside the wood. He gathered a few for her to wear.

"Though, really," he said, as he fitted them into the breast of her coat, "you ought to object to my putting them, because of the birds. But they don't give much the resemblance in this part, where they can get plenty of stuff. You often find the berries going rotten in the springtime."

So he distressed, scarcely aware of what he said, only knowing he was putting berries in the breast of her coat, while she stood patiently for him. And she watched his quick hands, so full of life, and it seemed to her she had never seen anything before. Till now, everything had been indistinct.

They came near to the colliery. It stood quite still and black among the corn-fields, its massive heap of slag now rising almost from the sea.

"What a pity there is a colliery here where it is so pretty!" said Clara.

"Do you think so?" he answered. "You see, I am so used to it I should miss it. No; and I like the pits here and there. I like the rows of tracks, and the headstocks, and the steam in the darkness, and the lights at night. When I was a boy, I always thought a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night was a pit, with its steam, and its lights, and the burning bank,—and I thought the Lord was always at the pit-top."

As they drove near home she walked in silence, and seemed to hang back. He pressed her fingers in his own. She flushed, but gave no response.

"Don't you want to come home?" he asked.

"Yes, I want to come," she replied.

It did not occur to him that her position at her home would be rather a peculiar and difficult one. To him it seemed just as if one of his men friends were going to be introduced to his mother, only alone.

The Moor's Road is a house in an ugly street that runs down a steep hill. The street itself was hideous. The house was rather superior to most. It was old, grey, with a big bay window, and it was semi-detached; but it looked gloomy. Then Paul opened the door to the garden, and all was different. The sunny afternoon was there, like another land. By the path grew many and little trees. In front of the window was a plot of sunny grass, with old black round it. And away went the garden, with heaps of dishevelled chrysanthemums in the sunshade, down to the symphony-



yes, and the field, and beyond one looked over a few red-roofed cottages in the hills with all the glow of the autumn afternoon.

Mrs. Morel sat in her rocking-chair, watching her black silk blouse. Her grey-brown hair was taken smooth back from her brow and her high temples; her face was rather pale. Clara, smiling, followed Paul into the kitchen. Mrs. Morel rose. Clara thought her a body, even rather stiff. The young woman was very nervous. She had almost a worried look, almost cramped.

"Mother—Clara," said Paul.

Mrs. Morel held out her hand and smiled.

"He has told me a good deal about you," she said.

The blood flared in Clara's cheeks.

"I hope you don't mind my coming," she faltered.

"I was pleased when he said he would bring you," replied Mrs. Morel.

Paul, watching, felt his heart contract with pain. His mother looked so small, and sad, and close-for beside the homely Clara.

"It's such a pretty day, mother! " he said. " And we are a joy."

His mother looked at him; he had turned to her. She thought: what a man he seemed, in his dark, well-made clothes. He was pale and detached-looking; it would be hard for any woman to keep him. Her heart glowed; then she was sorry for Clara.

"Perhaps you'll leave your things in the parlour," said Mrs. Morel nicely to the young woman.

"Oh, thank you," she replied.

"Come on," said Paul, and he led the way into the little book-room, with its old plans, its mahogany furniture, its yellowing marble mantelpiece. A fire was burning; the place was braced with books and drawing-boards. "I have my things lying about," he said. "It's so much easier."

She loved her mother's paraphernalia, and the books, and the photos of people. Even he was telling her: that was William, that was William's young lady in the evening dress, she was Annie and her husband, this was Arthur and his wife and the baby. She felt as if she were being taken into the family. He showed her photos, books, sketches, and they talked a little while. Then they returned to the kitchen. Mrs. Morel put aside her book. Clara wore a blouse of fine silk chiffon, with narrow black-and-white stripes; her hair was done simply, coiled on top of her head. She looked rather stately and reserved.

"You have gone to live down Sincaton Boulevard?" said Mrs. Morel. "When I was a girl—girl, I say!—when I was a young woman we lived in Minerva Terrace."

"Oh, did you?" said Clara. "I have a friend in Number 6."

And the conversation had started. They talked Nottingham and Nottingham people; it interested them both. Clara was still rather nervous; Mrs. Morel was still somewhat on her dignity. She dropped her language very clear and precise. But they were going to get so well acquainted, Paul saw.

Mrs. Morel measured herself against the younger woman, and found herself easily stronger. Clara was deferential. She knew Paul's surprising regard for his mother, and she had decided the meeting, expecting someone rather hard and cold. She was surprised to find this little interested woman chatting with such good-will; and then she felt, as she felt with Paul, that she would not care to stand in Mrs. Morel's way. There was something so hard and certain in her mother, as if she never felt a rubbing in her life.

Presently Morel came down, ruffled and yawning, from his afternoon sleep. He scratched his grizzled head, he patted in his stockings' feet, his whiskers hung open over his shirt. He seemed incongruous.

"This is Mrs. Dawson, father," said Paul.

Then Morel pulled himself together. Clara saw Paul's manner of beating and shaking hands.

"Oh, indeed?" exclaimed Morel. "I am very glad to see you—I am, I assure you. But don't disturb yourself! Oh, no; make yourself quite comfortable, and be very welcome."

Clara was astonished at this flood of hospitality from the old soldier. He was so courteous, so gallant! She thought him most delightful.

"And why you have come far?" he asked.

"Only from Nottingham," she said.

"From Nottingham! Then you have had a beautiful day for your journey."

Then he dragged into the scullery to wash his hands and face, and from there of habit came on to the hearth with the towel to dry himself.

As was Clara felt the refinement and scrupulous of the household. Mrs. Morel was perfectly at her ease. The pouring out the tea and attending to the people went on unconsciously, without interrupting her in her talk. There was a lot of room at the next table; the chairs of dark blue yellow-patterns looked pretty on the glossy cloth. There was a little bowl of small, yellow chrysanthemums. Clara felt the completed the circle, and it was a pleasure to rest. But she was rather afraid of the religiosity of the Morels, father and all. She took their tone; there was a feeling of balance. It was a cool, clear atmosphere, where everyone was

himself, and in harmony. Clara enjoyed it, but there was a far deeper at the bottom of her.

Paul cleared the table while his mother and Clara talked. Clara was conscious of his quick, vigorous body as it came and went, passing blown quickly by a wind at its work. It was almost like the father and brother of a leaf that comes unprovoked. When at last it went with him, by the way the leaves forward, as if blowing, Mrs. Morel could see she was possessed elsewhere as she talked, and again the older woman was sorry for her.

Having finished, he strolled down the garden, leaving the two women to talk. It was a happy, sunny afternoon, mild and soft. Clara glanced through the window after him as he listened among the chrysanthemums. She felt as if something almost laughable haunted her to him; yet he seemed so easy in his graceful, indolent movement, so detached as he did up the woody flower-bushes to their stalks, that she wondered at her helplessness.

Mrs. Morel rose.

"You will let me help you wash up," said Clara.

"Oh, there are no fire, it will only take me a minute," said the wife.

Clara, however, dried the tea-things, and was glad to be on such good terms with her mother; but it was useless not to be able to follow him down the garden. At last she allowed herself to go; she felt as if a rope were taken off her neck.

The afternoon was golden over the hills of Derbentiers. He stood across in the other garden, beside a bush of pale Michaelmas daisies, watching the last bees crawl into the hive. Hearing her coming, he turned to her work as easy motion, saying:

"It's the end of the run with these chaps."

Clara stood near him. Over the low red wall in front was the country and the far-off hills, all golden also.

At that moment Jeanne was passing through the garden-door. She saw Clara go up to him, saw him turn, and saw them come to rest together. Something in their perfect isolation together made her know that it was accomplished between them, that they were, as she put it, married. She walked very slowly down the slender-track of the long garden.

Clara had pulled a basket from a hollyhock spire, and was breaking it to get the seeds. Above her bowed head the pink flowers stared, as if defending her. The last bees were falling down to the hive.

"Clara, your money," laughed Paul, as she looks the last seeds one by one from the roll of coin. She looked at him.

"I'm well off," she said, smiling.

"How much? Pounds?" He snugged his fingers. "Can I turn them into gold?"

"I'm afraid not," she laughed.

They looked into each other's eyes, laughing. At that moment they became aware of Miriam. There was a click, and everything had altered.

"Hello, Miriam!" he exclaimed. "You said you'd come!"

"Yes. Had you forgotten?"

She shook hands with Clara, saying:

"It seems strange to see you here."

"Yes," replied the others: "it seems strange to be here."

There was a hesitation.

"It is pretty, isn't it?" said Miriam.

"I like it very much," replied Clara.

Then Miriam realised that Clara was accepted as she had never been.

"Have you come down alone?" asked Paul.

"Yes, I went to Agatha's to tea. We are going to chapel. I only called in for a moment to see Clara."

"You should have come in here to tea," he said.

Miriam laughed shortly, and Clara turned impatiently aside.

"Do you like the chrysanthemums?" he asked.

"Yes, they are very fine," replied Miriam.

"Which sort do you like best?" he asked.

"I don't know. The leaves, I think."

"I don't think you've seen all the sorts. Come and look. Come and see which are *your favourites*, Clara."

He led the two women back to his own garden, where the crowded bushes of flowers of all colours stood rapidly along the path down to the field. The mountain did not embarrass him, so his knowledge.

"Look, Miriam, these are the white ones that came from your garden. They were too late here, were they?"

"No," said Miriam.

"But they're harder. You're so sheltered; things grow big and tender, and then die. These little yellow ones I like. Will you have some?"

While they were out there the bells began to ring in the church, sounding loud across the town and the field. Miriam looked at the women, peered among the clattering rocks, and remembered the decision he had brought her. It had been different then, but he had not left her more yet. She asked him for a book to read. He ran indoors.

"What? Is that Miriam?" asked his mother coldly.

"Yes; she said she'd call and tell Clara."

"You told her, then?" came the anxious question.

"Yes; why shouldn't I?"

"There's certainly no reason why you shouldn't," said Mrs. Ward, and she returned to her book. He winced down his mother's long, downward writhingly, thinking: "Why can't I do as I like?"

"You've not seen Miss. Ward before?" Miriam was saying to Clara.

"No; but she's so nice!"

"Yes," said Miriam, dropping her head; "in some ways she's very fine."

"I should think so."

"But Paul told you much about her?"

"He had called a good deal."

"Oh!"

There was silence until he returned with the book.

"When will you want it back?" Miriam asked.

"When you like," he answered.

Clara turned to go indoors, whilst he accompanied Miriam to the gate.

"When will you come up to Willey Farm?" she latter asked.

"I couldn't say," replied Clara.

"Mother asked me to say she'd be pleased to see you any time, if you cared to come."

"Thank you; I should like to, but I can't say when."

"Oh, very well!" exclaimed Miriam rather bitterly, turning away.

She went down the path with her mouth to the flowers he had given her.

"You're sure you won't come in?" he said.

"No, thank."

"We are going to chapel."

"Oh, I shall see you, then!" Miriam was very bitter.

"Yes."

They parted. He left proudly towards her. She was bitter, and she scorned him. He still belonged to himself, she believed; yet he could have Clara, take her home, sit with her next his mother in chapel, give her the same hymn-book he had given herself years before. She heard him running quickly indoors.

But he did not go straight in. Halting on the plot of grass, he heard his mother's voice, then Clara's answer:

"What I have is the blindest quality in Miriam."

"Yes," said his mother quickly, "yes; doesn't it make you hate her, now?"

His heart went hot, and he was angry with them for talking about the girl. What right had they to say that? Something in the speech itself drove him into a kind of hate against Miriam. Then his own heart rebelled furiously at Clara's taking the liberty of speaking so about Miriam. After all, the girl was the better woman of the two, he thought, if it came to goodness. He went on. His mother looked excited. She was leaning with her hand rhythmically on the sofa-arm, as women do who are waiting out. He could never hear more the movement. There was silence, then he began to talk.

In chapel Miriam saw him find the place in the hymn-book for Clara, in exactly the same way as he used for himself. And during the service he could see the girl across the chapel, her hat throwing a dark shadow over her face. What did she think, seeing Clara with him? He did not stop to consider. He felt himself cruel towards Miriam.

After chapel he went over Farnish with Clara. It was a dark summer night. They had said good-bye to Miriam, and his heart had wanted him to be left the girl alone. "But it wasn't her right," he said inside himself, and at almost gave him pleasure to go off under her eye with this other handsome woman.

There was a scent of damp leaves in the darkness. Clara's hand lay warm and firm in his own as they walked. He was full of conflict. The battle that raged inside him made him feel depressed.

By Farnish Hill Clara leaned against him as he went. He shod his arm round her waist. Feeling the strong muscles of her body under his arm as she walked, the upthrust in his chest because of Miriam relaxed, and the hot blood flushed him. He held her close and close.

Then: "You still keep on with Miriam," she said quietly.

"Only talk. There never was a great deal more than talk between us," he said lightly.

"Your mother doesn't care for her," said Clara.

"No, or I might have married her. But it's all up, really!"

Suddenly his voice went passionate with hate.

"If I was with her now, we should be jiving about the Christian Mystery, or some such tack. Thank God, I'm not!"

They walked on in silence for some time.

"But you can't really give her up," said Clara.

"I don't give her up, because there's nothing to give," he said.

"There is for her."

"I don't know why she and I shouldn't be friends as long as we live," he said. "But I'll only be friends."

Clara drew away from him, leaving away from contact with him.

"What are you drawing away for?" he asked.

She did not answer, but drew further from him.

"Why do you want to walk alone?" he asked.

Still there was no answer. She walked resolutely, keeping her head.

"Imagine I said I would be friends with Marion?" he exclaimed.

She would not answer him anything.

"I tell you it's only words that go between us," he persisted, trying to take her again.

She resisted. Suddenly he strode across in front of her, barring her way.

"Damn it!" he said. "What do you want now?"

"You'd better run after Marion," insisted Clara.

The blood flamed up in him. He stood showing his teeth. She dropped silently. The lane was dark, quite lonely. He suddenly caught her in his arms, stretched forward, and put his mouth on her face in a kiss of rage. She turned frantically to avoid him. He held her fast. Hard and violent his mouth came for her. Her breast hurt against the wall of his chest. Helpless, she went loose in his arms, and he tossed her, and faced her.

He heard people coming down the hill.

"Stand up! stand up!" he said sharply, gripping her arm off it. If he had let go, she would have sunk to the ground.

She righted and walked slowly beside him. They went on in silence.

"We will go over the field," he said, and then she woke up.

But she let herself be helped over the stile, and she walked in silence with him over the fast dark field. It was the way to Northampton and to the station, she knew. He seemed to be looking about. They came out on a bare hilltop where stood the dark figure of the ruined windmill. There he halted. They stood together high up in the darkness, looking at the lights scattered on the right below them, hundreds of gleaming points, villages lying high and low on the dark, bare and there.

"Like walking among the stars," he said, with a quiet laugh.

Then he took her in his arms, and held her fast. She moved aside her mouth to ask, stopped and knew.

"What time is it?"

"It doesn't matter," he pleaded sharply.

"Yes it does—good, I must go!"

"It's early yet," he said.

"What time is it?" she insisted.

All round lay the black night, speckled and speckled with lights.

"I don't know."

She put her hand on his chest, feeling for his watch. He felt the joints like wire flies. She groped in his waistcoat pocket, while he stood panting. In the darkness she could see the round, pale face of the watch, but not the figure. She scooped over it. He was peering till he could take her in his arms again.

"I can't see," she said.

"Then don't bother."

"Yes; I'm going," she said, turning away.

"Wait! I'll look!" But he could not see. "I'll strike a match."

He secretly hoped it was too late to catch the train. She saw the glowing lantern of his hands as he rattled the light, then he shot it up, his eyes fixed on the watch. Instantly all was dark again. All was black before her eyes; only a glowing watch was red near her feet. Where was he?

"What is it?" she asked, afraid.

"You can't do it," his voice answered out of the darkness.

There was a pause. She felt in his power. She had heard the tug at his wrist. It frightened her.

"What time is it?" she asked, quiet, definite, hopeless.

"Two minutes to nine," he replied, telling the truth with a struggle.

"And can I get from here to the station in fourteen minutes?"

"No. At any rate——"

She could distinguish his dark form again a yard or so away. She wanted to escape.

"But can't I do it?" she pleaded.

"If you hurry," he said bravely. "But you could easily walk it, Clara; it's only seven miles to the train. I'll come with you."

"No, I want to catch the train."

"But why?"

"I do—I want to catch the train."

Suddenly his voice altered.

"Very well," he said, dry and hard. "Come along, then."

And he plunged ahead into the darkness. She ran after him, wanting to cry. Now he was hard and cruel to her. She ran over the rough, dark fields behind him, out of breath, ready to drop. But the double row of lights at the station drew nearer. Suddenly—

"There she is!" he cried, breaking into a run.

There was a faint rattling noise. Away to the right the train, like a luminous caterpillar, was shooting across the night. The rattling ceased.

"That's over the viaduct. You'll just do it."

Clara ran quite out of breath, and fell at last into the train.



The infinite bliss. He was gone. Gone!—and she was in a country full of people. She felt the cruelty of it.

He turned round and plunged home. Before he knew where he was he was in the kitchen at home. He was very pale. His eyes were dark and dangerous-looking, as if he were drunk. His mother looked at him.

"Well, I must say your home are in a nice state!" she said.

He looked at his feet. Then he took off his overcoat. His mother wondered if he were drunk.

"She caught the tonic, then?" she said.

"Yes."

"I hope her feet weren't so flimy. Where on earth you dragged her I don't know!"

He was silent and motionless for some time.

"Did you like her?" he asked grudgingly at last.

"Yes, I liked her. But you'll like of her, my son; you know you will."

He did not answer. She noticed how he laboured in his breathing.

"Have you been running?" she asked.

"We had to run for the train."

"You'll go and knock yourself up. You'd better drink hot milk."

It was as good a reminder as he could have, but he refused and went to bed. There he lay face down on the counterpane, and shed tears of rage and pain. There was a physical pain that made him bite his lips till they bled, and the chase made him feel him unable to think, almost to feel.

"This is how she serves me, is it?" he said in his heart, over and over, pressing his face in the quilt. And he hated her. Again he went over the scenes, and again he hated her.

The next day there was a new sorrow about him. Clara was very gentle, almost loving. But he crossed her distantly, with a touch of contempt. She smiled, continuing to be gentle. He came round.

One evening of that week Sarah Bernhardt was at the Theatre Royal in Nottingham, giving "La Dame aux Camélias." Paul wanted to see this old and famous actress, and he asked Clara to accompany him. He told his mother to leave the key in the window for him.

"Shall I look after?" he asked of Clara.

"Yes. And put on an evening suit, will you? I've never seen you in it."

"But, good Lord, Clara! Think of me in evening suit at the theatre!" he remonstrated.

"Would you rather not?" she asked.

"I will if you want me to; but I *will* find a fool."

She laughed at him.

"Then find a fool for my sake, now, won't you?"

The request made his blood flush up.

"I suppose I *will* have to."

"What are you taking a post-card for?" his mother asked. He blushed furiously.

"Clara asked me," he said.

"And what note are you going to?"

"Clara—clara and me each!"

"Well, I'm sure!" exclaimed his mother sarcastically.

"It's only once at the island of blue snows," he said.

He dressed at Jacobus's, put on an overcoat and a cap, and met Clara in a café. She was with one of her suffragette friends. She wore an old long coat, which did not suit her, and had a little wrap over her head, which he hated. The three went to the theatre together.

Clara took off her coat as she sat, and he discovered she was in a sort of semi-erasing dress, that left her arms and neck, and part of her breast bare. Her hair was done fashionably. The dress, a simple thing of green crepe, suited her. She looked quite grand, he thought. He could see her figure inside the frock, as if that were wrapped closely round her. The firmness and the softness of her upright body could almost be felt as he looked at her. He checked his fire.

And he was to sit all the evening beside her beautiful naked arm, watching the strong throat rise from the strong chest, watching the bosom under the green stuff, the curve of her limbs as she sipped down. Something in him hated her again for submitting him to the torture of necromancy. And he loved her as she balanced her head and stared straight in front of her, posing, virginal, immobile, as if she yielded herself to her fate because it was too strong for her. (She could not help herself; she was in the grip of something bigger than herself. A kind of eternal look about her, as if she were a virginal sphinx, made it necessary for him to love her. He dropped the programme, and crouched down on the floor to get it, so that he could kiss her hand and wrist. Her beauty was a torture to him. She sat immobile. Only, when the lights went down, she took a little against him, and he caressed her hand and arm with his fingers. He could smell her faint perfume. All the time his blood kept sweeping up in great white-hot waves that killed his consciousness momentarily.

The drama continued. He saw it all in the distance, going on yet.

somewhere; he did not know where, but it seemed the easy inside him. He was Clara's white heavy arms, her throat, her moving bosom. That seemed to be himself. Then away somewhere the play went on, and he was identified with that also. There was no himself. The grey and black eyes of Clara, her bosom rising down on him, his arms that he held propped between his hands, were all that counted. Then he felt himself small and helpless, her pressing in her face above him.

Only the intervals, when the lights came up, hurt him temporarily. He wanted to run anywhere, so long as it would be dark again. In a sense, he wandered out for a drink. Then the lights were out, and the strange, unreal reality of Clara and the darkness took hold of him again.

The play went on. But he was obsessed by the dream to kiss the tiny blue nose that nodded in the bend of her arm. He could feel it. His whole life seemed suspended till he had put his lips down. It must be done. And the other people? At last he bent quickly forward and touched it with his lips. His mouth-the brushed the sensitive flesh. Clara shivered, drew away her arm.

When all was over, the lights up, the people stopping, he came to himself and looked at his watch. His train was gone.

"I'll have to walk home!" he said.

Clara looked at him.

"Is it too late?" she asked.

He nodded. Then he helped her on with her coat.

"I love you! You look beautiful in that dress," he murmured over her shoulder, among the throng of waiting people.

She remained quiet. Together they went out of the theatre. He saw the rain waiting, the people passing. It seemed he met a pair of brown eyes which hated him, that he did not know. He and Clara turned away, mechanically taking the direction to the station.

The train had gone. He would have to walk the ten miles home.

"It doesn't matter," he said. "I shall enjoy it."

"Won't you," she said shaking, "come home for the night? I can sleep with mother."

He looked at her. Their eyes met.

"What will your mother say?" he asked.

"She won't mind."

"You're sure?"

"Quite."

"Shall I come?"

"If you will."

"Very well."

And they turned away. At the first stopping-place they took the car. The wind blew fresh in their faces. The moon was dark, the trees tipped in its light. His car with her hand fast in his

"Will your mother be gone to bed?" he asked.

"She may be. I hope not."

They hurried along the silent, dark lonely street, the only people out of doors. Clara quickly entered the house. He hesitated

"Come in," she said.

He leaped up the step and was in the room. His mother appeared in the inner doorway, large and handsome.

"Who have you got there?" she asked.

"It's Mr. Morel. He has passed his exam. I thought we might put him up for the night, and save him a two-mile walk."

"If not?" exclaimed Mrs. Radford. "That's your lookout! If you've invited him, he's very welcome as far as I'm concerned. He keeps the house!"

"If you don't like me, I'll go away again," he said.

"No, no, you needn't! Come along in! I don't want you'll look at the supper I'd got her."

It was a little dish of chip potatoes and a piece of bacon. The table was roughly laid for one.

"You can have some more bacon," continued Mrs. Radford. "More chips you can't have."

"It's a shame to bother you," he said.

"Oh, don't you be apologetic! It doesn't do us! You treated her to the dinner, didn't you?" There was a rustle in the last question.

"Well?" laughed Paul uncomprehendingly.

"Well, and -here's an inch of bacon! Take your coat off!"

The big, straightforward woman was trying to minimize the situation. She moved about the cupboard. Clara took his coat. The room was very warm and cozy in the lamplight.

"My coat!" exclaimed Mrs. Radford. "but you two's a pair of bright beauties, I must say! What's all that get-up for?"

"I believe we don't know," he said, feeling a victim.

"There can't come in that house for one such liberty-lance, if you fly your liver that high!" she smiled them. It was a merry threat.

He in his dinner jacket, and Clara in her green dress and bare arms, were confused. They felt they must shelter each other in that little kitchen.

"And look at that blossom!" continued Mrs. Radford, pointing to Clara. "What does she reckon she did it for?"

Paul looked at Clara. She was rosy; her neck was warm with blushes. There was a moment of silence.

"You like to see it, don't you?" he asked.

The mother had them in her power. All the time, his heart was beating hard, and he was rigid with anxiety. But he would fight her.

"He likes to see it!" exclaimed the old woman. "What should I like to see her make a fool of herself by?"

"I've seen people look bigger fools," he said. Clara was under his protective gaze.

"Oh, yes! and when was that?" came the sarcastic rejoinder.

"When they made fights of themselves," he answered.

Mrs. Radford, large and dominating, stood suspended on the hearthrug, holding her fork.

"They're both either good," she answered at length, turning to the Dutch oven.

"No," he said, fighting stoutly. "Folk ought to look as well as they can."

"And do you call that looking well?" cried the mother, pointing a scornful fork at Clara. "That—that looks as if it wasn't properly dressed!"

"I believe you're jealous that you can't cook as well," he said laughing.

"Maj! I could have worn evening dress with anybody, if I'd wanted to!" came the scornful answer.

"And why didn't you wear to?" he asked persistently. "Or did you wear it?"

There was a long pause. Mrs. Radford anticipated the bacon in the Dutch oven. His heart beat fast, for thus he had offended her.

"Maj!" she exclaimed at last. "No, I didn't! And when I was in service, I knew as soon as one of the maids came out at bare shoulders what sort she was, going to her company hop!"

"Were you too good to go to a company hop?" he said.

Clara sat with bowed head. His eyes were dark and gleaming. Mrs. Radford took the Dutch oven from the fire, and stood near him, putting her arm off bacon on his plate.

"There's a nice creamy hat!" she said.

"Don't give me the hat!" he said.

"She's got what she wants," was the answer.

There was a sort of successful exorcism as the woman's tone that made Paul know she was justified.

"But do have some!" he said to Clara.

She looked up at him with her grey eyes, humiliated and lonely.

"No thanks!" she said.

"Why won't you?" he answered carelessly.

The blood was boiling up like fire in his veins. Mrs. Radford sat down again, large and impressive and aloof. He left Clara altogether to attend to the mother.

"They say Sarah Bernhardt's silly," he said.

"Filly!" She's turned nasty!" came the scornful answer.

"Well," he said, "you'd never think it!" She made no sign to leave even now.

"I should like to see myself howling at that bad old baggage!" said Mrs. Radford. "It's done her before to think herself a grandmother, not a striking catamane!"

He laughed.

"A catamane is a horse the Malays use," he said.

"And it's a word as I use," she retorted.

"My mother does sometimes, and it's no good my telling her," he said.

"I'd think she knows your own," said Mrs. Radford, good-humouredly.

"She'd like to, and she says she will, so I give her a little steel to steel on."

"That's the worst of my mother," said Clara. "She never wants a steel for anything."

"But she often can't touch that lady with a long prep," returned Mrs. Radford to Paul.

"It'd think she doesn't want touching with a prep," he laughed. "I shouldn't."

"It might do the job of you good to give you a smack on the head with one," said the mother, laughing suddenly.

"Why are you so vindictive towards me?" he said. "I've not stolen anything from you."

"No, I'll watch that," laughed the older woman.

Soon the supper was finished. Mrs. Radford sat guard in her chair. Paul lit a cigarette. Clara went upstairs, returning with a sleeping-suit, which she spread on the floor to dry.

"Why, I'd sleep all about them!" said Mrs. Radford. "Where have they spring from?"

"Out of my drawer."

"H'm! You thought 'em the same, as 'he wouldn't wear 'em, would he?'—laughing. "Said he reckoned to do without trousers /'bed." She turned confidentially to Paul, saying: "He couldn't bear 'em, them pyjama things."

The young man sat making rings of smoke.

"Well, it's everyone to his taste," he laughed.

Then followed a little discussion of the merits of pygones.

"My mother loves me in there," he said. "She says I'm a player."

"I can't imagine they'd see you," said Mrs. Radford.

After a while he glanced at the little clock that was ticking on the mantelpiece. It was half-past twelve.

"It is a hurry," he said, "but it takes time to settle down to sleep after the theatre."

"It's about time you did," said Mrs. Radford, clearing the table.

"Are you tired?" he asked of Clara.

"Not the least bit," she answered, avoiding his eyes.

"Shall we have a game at cribbage?" he said.

"I've forgotten it."

"Well, I'll teach you again. May we play with, Mrs. Radford?" he asked.

"You'll please yourself," she said; "but it's pretty late."

"A game or so will make us sleepy," he answered.

Clara brought the cards, and set spinning her wedding-ring whilst he shuffled them. Mrs. Radford was washing up in the scullery. As it grew later Paul felt the situation getting more and more tense.

"Fifteen two, fifteen four, fifteen six, and two's eight—!"

The clock struck one. Still the game continued. Mrs. Radford had done all the little jobs preparatory to going to bed, had locked the door and filled the kettle. Still Paul went on dealing and counting. He was obsessed by Clara's arms and throat. He believed he could see where the division was just beginning for her breasts. He could not leave her. She watched his hands, and felt her joints crack as they moved quickly. She was so tense, it was almost as if he touched her, and yet not quite. His words were casual. He hated Mrs. Radford. She sat on, merely dropping asleep, but determined and obstinate in her chain. Paul glanced at her, then at Clara. She met his eyes, that were angry, working, and hard as steel. Her eyes answered him in shame. He knew she, at any rate, was of his mind. He played on.

At last Mrs. Radford roused herself willy, and said:

"Isn't it high on time you two was thinking of bed?"

Paul played on without answering. He hated her sufficiently to murder her.

"Half a minute," he said.

The older woman rose and walked stolidly into the scullery, returning with his candle, which she put on the mantelpiece. Then she sat down again. The hazard of her seat as hot down his veins, he dropped his cards.

"We'll stop, then," he said, but his voice was still a challenge.

Clara saw his mouth shut hard. Again he glanced at her. It seemed like an agreement. She bent over the candy, coughing, to cheer her throat.

"Well, I'm glad you've finished," said Mrs. Radford. "Here take your things"—she thrust the warm nut in his hand—"and this is your needle. Your mother's over that; there's only two, so you can't go far wrong. Well, good-night. I hope you'll rest well."

"I'm sure I shall, I always do," he said.

"Yes; and so you ought at your age," she replied.

He bade good-night to Clara, and went. The evening staid of white, scratched wood cracked and clanged at every step. He went doggedly. The two doors faced each other. He went in his room, pushed the door to, without fastening the latch.

It was a small room with a large bed. Some of Clara's hairpins were on the dressing-table—her hair-brush. Her clothes and some shoes hung under a cloth in a corner. There was actually a pair of stockings over a chair. He explored the room. Two books of his own were there on the shelf. He undressed, folded his suit, and sat on the bed, listening. Then he blew out the candle, lay down, and in two minutes was almost asleep. Then died—he was wide awake and writhing in torment. It was as if, when he had nearly got to sleep, something had bitten him suddenly and sent him mad. He sat up and looked at the room in the darkness. His feet doubled under him, perfectly motionless, listening. He heard a rat somewhere away outside; then the heavy, pointed tread of the mother, then Clara's distinct voice.

"Will you undress my dress?"

There was silence for some time. At last the mother said:

"Now then! aren't you coming up?"

"No, not yet," replied the daughter calmly.

"Oh, very well! then! If it's not late enough, stay a bit longer. Only you needn't come waking me up when I've got to sleep."

"I shan't be long," said Clara.

Immediately afterwards Paul heard the mother slowly ascending the stairs. The candle-light flamed through the cracks in his door. Her dress brushed the door, and his heart jumped. Then it was dark, and he heard the creak of her latch. She was very leisurely looking at her preparations for sleep. After a long time it was quite still. He sat wrung up on the bed, shivering slightly. His door was an inch open. As Clara came upstairs, he would intercept her. He waited. All was dead silence. The clock struck



two. Then he heard a slight scrape of the footer downstairs. Now he could not help himself. His shivering was uncontrollable. He felt he must go to die.

He stepped off the bed, and stood a moment, shuddering. Then he went straight to the door. He tried to step lightly. The first stair cracked like a shot. He halted. The old woman stirred in her bed. The staircase was dark. There was a slit of light under the main-floor door, which opened into the kitchen. He stood a moment. Then he went on, mechanically. Every step cracked, and his back was creeping, but the old woman's door should open behind him up above. He fidgeted with the door at the hallway. The latch opened with a loud click. He went through into the kitchen, and shut the door gently behind him. The old woman doesn't come now.

Then he stood, arrested. Clara was kneeling on a pile of white underclothing on the hearthrug, her back towards him, warming herself. She did not look round, but sat crouching on her heels, and her rounded beautiful back was towards him, and her face was hidden. She was warming her body at the fire for consolation. The glow was rosy on one side, the shadow was dark and warm on the other. Her arms hung slack.

He shuddered violently, clenching his teeth and fists hard to keep control. Then he went forward to her. He put one hand on her shoulder, the fingers of the other hand under her chin to raise her face. A convulsed shiver ran through her, once, twice, at his touch. She kept her head bent.

"Sorry!" he murmured, realising that his hands were very cold.

Then she looked up at him, frightened, like a thing that is afraid of death.

"My hands are so cold," he murmured.

"I like it," she whispered, closing her eyes.

The breath of her mouth was on his mouth. Her arms clasped his knees. The cord of her sleepgown clasped against her and made her shiver. As the warmth went into her, his shuddering became less.

At length, unable to stand so any more, he asked her, and she buried her head on his shoulder. His hands went over her slowly with an infinite tenderness of caress. She clung close to him, trying to hide herself against him. He clasped her very close. Then at last she looked up at him, once, imploring, looking to see if she must be released.

His eyes were dark, very deep, and very quiet. It was as if her history and his talking to hurt him, made him sorrowful. He looked

at her with a little pain, and was afraid. He was so humble before her. She kissed him fervently on the eyes, first one, then the other, and she filled herself to him. She gave herself. He held her fast. It was a moment before almost to agony.

She stood before him, before her and tremble with joy of her. It healed her heart pain. It healed her; it made her glad. It made her feel new and proud again. Her pride had been wounded inside her. She had been disappointed. Now she returned with joy and pride again. It was her restoration and her recognition.

Then he looked at her, his face radiant. They laughed to each other, and he remained her to his chest. The seconds ticked off, the minutes passed, and still the two stood clasped right together, mouth to mouth, like a statue in one block.

But again his fingers were resting over her, restless, wandering, dissatisfied. The hot blood came up wave upon wave. She laid her head on his shoulder.

"Come you to my room," he murmured.

She looked at him and shook her head, her mouth pointing disconsolately, her eyes heavy with passion. He watched her fondly.

"Yes," he said.

Again she shook her head.

"Why not?" he asked.

She looked at him still heavily, sorrowfully, and again she shook her head. His eyes hardened, and he gave way.

When, later on, he was back in bed, he wondered why she had refused to come to him openly, so that her mother would know. At any rate, then things would have been definite. And she could have stayed with him the night, without having to go, as she was, to her mother's bed. It was strange, and he could not understand it. And then almost immediately he fell asleep.

He awoke in the morning with someone speaking to him. Opening his eyes, he saw Mrs. Roddard, big and stately, looking down on him. She held a cup of tea at her hand.

"Do you think you're going to sleep all December?" she said.

He laughed at once.

"It might only be to be about five o'clock," he said.

"Well," she answered, "it's half-past seven, whether or not. Here, I've brought you a cup of tea."

He nibbled his face, pushed the rumpled hair off his forehead, and moved himself.

"What's it so late for?" he growled.

He resented being wakened. It annoyed her. She saw his neck

in the flannel sleeping-jacket, as white and round as a girl's. He rubbed his face wearily.

"It's no good your scratching your head," observed. "It won't make it no wicker. Here, an' how long d'you think I'm going to stand waiting wif' this lame leg?"

"Oh, dash the leg!" he said.

"You should go to bed an' sleep," said the woman.

He looked up at her, laughing with impudence.

"I went to bed before you did," he said.

"Yes, my Gwynny, you did!" she exclaimed.

"Fanny," he said, stirring his tea, "having tea brought us bed to me! My mother'll think I've raised the lid."

"Don't she never do it?" asked Mrs. Radford.

"She'd as have think of trying."

"Ah, I always speak my lot! That's why they've named our mate bad um," said the elderly woman.

"You'd only Clara," he said. "And Mr. Radford's in heaven. So I suppose there's only you left to be the bad um."

"I'm not bad; I'm only old," she said, as she went out of the bedroom. "I'm only a fool, I am!"

Clara was very quiet at breakfast, but she had a sort of air of proprietorship over him that pleased him immensely. Mrs. Radford was evidently fond of him. He began to talk of his passing.

"What's the good," exclaimed the mother, "of your whirling and worrying and fretting and noo-um' at that palating of yours? What good does it do you, I should like to know? You'd better be happy yourself."

"Oh, but," exclaimed Paul, "I made over thirty guineas last year."

"Did you? Well, that's a consideration, but it's nothing to the use you put in."

"And I've got four pounds-ewig. A man said he'd give me five pounds if I'd point him and his mink and the dog and the carriage. And I went and put the fork in instead of the dog, and he was waxy, so I had to knock a quid off. I was tick of it, and I didn't like the dog. I made a picture of it. What shall I do when he pays me the four pounds?"

"Nay! you know your own use for your money," said Mrs. Radford.

"But I'm going to bust the four pounds. Should we go to the market for a day or two?"

"Who?"

"You and Clara and me."

"What, on your money?" she exclaimed, half wrathful.

"Why not?"

"You wouldn't be long in breaking your neck at a hurdle race!" she said.

"So long as I get a good run for my money! Will you?"

"Why, you may settle that between you."

"And you're willing?" he asked, amused and rejoicing.

"You'll do as you like," said Mrs. Radford, "whether I'm willing or not."

*Buster Dawson*

Some other Paul had been to the theatre with Clara. He was drinking in the French Road with some friends of his when Dawson came in. Clara's husband was growing stout; his eyelids were getting dark over his brown eyes; he was losing his healthy firmness of flesh. He was very evidently on the downward track. Having quarrelled with his sister, he had gone into cheap lodgings. His mistress had told him for a man who would marry her. He had been in prison one night for fighting when he was drunk, and there was a shady betting episode in which he was concerned.

Paul and he were confirmed enemies, and yet there was between them that peculiar feeling of intimacy, as if they were secretly near to each other, which sometimes exists between two people, although they never speak to one another. Paul often thought of Buster Dawson, often wanted to get at him and be friends with him. He knew that Dawson often thought about him, and that the man was drawn to him by some bond or other. And yet the two never looked at each other save as hostility.

Since he was a regular employee at Jordan's, it was the thing for Paul to offer Dawson a drink.

"What'll you have?" he asked of him.

"None but a bleeding like you!" replied the man.

Paul turned away with a slight disdainful movement of the shoulders, very irritating.

"The aristocracy," he answered, "is really a military institution. Take Germany, now. She's got thousands of aristocrats whose only means of subsistence is the army. They're deadly poor, and life's deadly slow. So they hope for a war. They look for war as a chance of getting on. Till there's a war they are idle good-for-nothings. When there's a war, they are leaders and conquerors. That you are, then—they want war!"

He was not a favorable debater in the public-house, being too quick and overhearing. He irritated the other men by his sensitive manner, and his cockiness. They listened in silence, and were not sorry when he finished.

Dawson interrupted the young man's flow of eloquence by asking, in a loud voice:

"Did you learn all that at th' theatre th' other night?"

Paul looked at him; their eyes met. Then he knew Dawson had seen him coming out of the theatre with Clara.

"Why, what about th' theatre?" asked one of Paul's associates, glad to get a dig at the young fellow, and wanting something busy.

"Oh, here in a belated evening suit, on the lady-side!" sneered Dawson, jutting his head contemptuously at Paul.

"That's correct! it being," said the sneered friend. "Fast as 'st?"

"True, begot!" said Dawson.

"Go on; let's have it!" cried the sneered friend.

"You've got it," said Dawson, "as I reckon morally had it as 'st."

"Well, I'll be jiggered!" said the sneered friend. "As' was it a proper suit?"

"True, God bless—yes!"

"Show us you know!"

"Oh," said Dawson, "I reckon he spent th' night—"

There was a good deal of laughter at Paul's expense.

"But what was she? If you know her?" asked the sneered friend.

"I should say she," said Dawson.

This brought another burst of laughter.

"There's a bit of it," said the sneered friend.

Dawson shook his head, and took a gulp of beer.

"It's a wonder he hasn't let on himself," he said. "He'll be bragging of it in a bit."

"Come on, Paul," said the friend; "it's no good. You might just as well come up."

"Come up what? That I happened to take a third to the theatre?"

"Oh, well, if it was all right, tell us who she was, lad," said the friend.

"She was all right," said Dawson.

Paul was nervous. Dawson wiped his golden moustache with his fingers, sneering.

"Sillies me—! One o' them sort?" said the sneered friend.

"Paul, boy, I'm surprised at you. And do you know her, father?"

"Just a bit, Ma!"

He winked at the other men.

"Oh, well," said Paul, "I'll be going!"

The sneered friend laid a deterring hand on his shoulder.

"May," he said, "you don't get off as easy as that, my lad. We've got to have a full account of this business."

"Then get it from Dams!" he said.

"You shouldn't back your own family, man," remonstrated the friend.

Then Dams made a remark which caused Paul to throw half a glass of beer in his face.

"Oh, Mr. Mow!" cried the barmaid, and she rang the bell for the "chucker-out."

Dams got and rushed for the young man. At that moment a brassy fellow with his shirt-sleeves rolled up and his trousers right over his shoulders intervened.

"Now, then!" he said, pushing his chest in front of Dams.

"Come out!" cried Dams.

Paul was leaning, when, and quivering, against the brass rail of the bar. He stared Dams, waited something could exterminate him at that minute; and at the same time, seeing the wet hair on the man's forehead, he thought he looked pathetic. He did not move.

"Come out, you——," said Dams.

"That's enough, Dams," cried the barmaid.

"Come on," said the "chucker-out," with kindly insistence, "you'd better be getting on."

And, by pushing Dams edge away from his own close proximity, he worked him to the door.

"That's the little sod as started it!" cried Dams, half cowed, pointing to Paul Mow.

"Wily, what a story, Mr. Dams!" said the barmaid. "You know it was you all the time!"

Still the "chucker-out" kept throwing his chest forward at him, still he kept edging back, until he was in the doorway and on the steps outside; then he turned round.

"All right," he said, nodding straight at his rival.

Paul had a various mixture of pity, almost of affection, mingled with violent hate, for the man. The coloured door swung to, there was silence in the bar.

"Serve him jolly well right!" said the barmaid.

"But it's a nasty thing to get a glass of beer in your eye," said the mutual friend.

"I tell you I was glad he did," said the barmaid. "Will you have another, Mr. Mow?"

She held up Paul's glass sympathizingly. He nodded.

"He's a man as doesn't care for anything, is Harter Dams," said one

"Paul? is he?" said the barmaid. "He's a loud-mouthed one; he is, and they're never much good. Give me a glass-and-a-half cheap, if you want a drink."

"Well, Paul, my lad," said the friend, "you'll have to take care of yourself now for a while."

"You won't have to give him a chance over you, that's all," said the barmaid.

"Can you beat?" asked a friend.

"Not a bit," he answered, still very white.

"I might give you a turn or two," said the friend.

"Thanks, I haven't time."

And presently he took his departure.

"Go along with him, Mr. Jackson," whispered the barmaid, tipping Mr. Jackson the wink.

The man nodded, took his hat, said "Good-night all," very heartily, and followed Paul, saying:

"Half a minute, old man. You w' me's going the same road, I believe."

"Mr. Morel doesn't like it," said the barmaid. "You'll see, we shan't have him so much more. I'm sorry; he's good company. And Baxter Brown wasn't looking up, that's what he wants."

Paul would have died rather than his mother should get to know of the affair. He suffered tortures of humiliation and self-consciousness. There was now a good deal of his life of which necessarily he could not speak to his mother. He had a life apart from her—his sexual life. The one she still kept. But he felt he had to conceal something from her, and it irked him. There was a certain silence between them, and he felt he had, in that silence, to defend himself against her; he felt condemned by her. Thus sometimes he hated her, and pulled at her handkerchief. His life wanted to free itself of her. It was like a circle whose life turned back on itself, and got no further. She loved him, loved him, kept him and his love turned back into him, so that he could not be free to go forward with his own life, really love another woman. At this period, unconsciously, he retained his mother's influence. He did not tell her things, there was a distance between them.

Clara was happy, almost sure of him. She felt she had at last got him for herself; and then again came the uncertainty. He told her gaily of the affair with her husband. Her colour came up, her grey eyes flashed.

"That's him to a 'T'," she cried—"like a navy! He's not fit for mixing with decent folk."

"You got married him," he said.



It made her furious that he wounded her.

"I don't," she cried. "But how can I be kinder?"

"I think he might have been rather nice," he said.

"You think I made him what he is?" she exclaimed.

"Oh, no! he made himself. But there's something about him——"

Clare looked at her lover closely. There was something in him she hated, a sort of detached criticism of himself, a coldness which made her womanly soul harbor against him.

"And what are you going to do?" she asked.

"Hire!"

"About Foster?"

"There's nothing to do, is there?" he replied.

"You can fight him if you have to, I suppose?" she said.

"No, I haven't the least sense of the 'fin.' It's funny. With most men there's the instinct to climb the fist and bite. It's not so with me. I should want a knife or a pistol or something to fight with."

"Then you'd better carry something," she said.

"Silly," he laughed. "I'm not dangerous."

"But he'll do something to you. You don't know him."

"All right," he said. "we'll see."

"And you'll let him?"

"Perhaps, if I can't help it."

"And if he kills you?" she said.

"I should be sorry, for his sake and mine."

Clare was silent for a moment.

"You do make me angry!" she exclaimed.

"That's nothing awful," he laughed.

"But why are you so silly? You don't know him."

"And don't want."

"Yes, but you're not going to let a man do as he likes with you?"

"What must I do?" he replied, laughing.

"I should carry a revolver," she said. "I'm sure he's dangerous."

"I might blow my finger off," he said.

"No, but won't you?" she pleaded.

"No."

"Not anything?"

"No."

"And you'll leave him to——?"

"Yes."

"You are a fool!"

"Fare!"

She set her teeth with anger:

"I could strike you!" she cried, trembling with passion.

"Why?"

"Let a man like her do as he likes with you."

"You can go back to him if he triumphs," he said.

"Do you want me to hate you?" she asked.

"Well, I only tell you," he said.

"And *you* say you *love* me!" she exclaimed, low and indignant.

"Cling to me, stay here to please you!" he said. "But if I die, see what a hold he'll have over me."

"Do you think I'm a fool?" she exclaimed.

"Not at all. But you don't understand me, my dear."

There was a pause between them.

"But you ought not to expose yourself," she pleaded.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"The man in righteousness arrayed,  
The pure and blameless lover,  
Needs not the keen Toledo blade,  
Nor venom-frightened quiver!"

he quoted.

She looked at him searchingly.

"I wish I could understand you," she said.

"There's simply nothing to understand," he laughed.

She bowed her head, brooding.

He did not see Dawn for several days, then one morning as he ran upstairs from the spiral room he almost collided with the barely mortal woman.

"What do—!" cried she weakly.

"Sorry!" said Paul, and passed on.

"Stop!" accused Dawn.

Paul whistled lightly, "Put life among the Girls."

"Put stop your whistle, my jockey!" he said.

The other took no notice.

"You're gone to answer for that job of the other night!"

Paul went to his desk in his corner, and turned over the leaves of his ledger.

"Go and tell Fanny I want order-egg, quick!" he said to his boy.

Dawn stood in the doorway, tall and threatening, looking at the top of the young man's head.

"Six and five's eleven and seven's not-and-six," Paul added aloud.

"And you hear, do you?" said Dawn.

"*Size and shape!*" He wrote a figure. "What's that?" he said.

"I'm going to show you what it is," said the smith.

The other went on adding the figures aloud.

"*Your travelin' little—, yer dancin' feet are poppin'!*"

Paul quickly switched the heavy roller. Dawes started. The young man rolled some lines in his lodger. The older man was informed.

"But wait till I light on you, no matter where it is, I'll settle your back for a bit, yer little rears!"

"All right," said Paul.

At that the smith started loudly from the doorway. Just then a whistle piped shrilly. Paul went to the speaking-tube.

"Yar!" he said, and he listened. "*Er—yes!*" He listened, then he laughed. "I'll come down directly. I've got a visitor just now."

Dawes knew from his tone that he had been speaking to Clara. He stepped forward.

"*Yar little devil!*" he said. "I'll visit you, inside of ten minutes! Think I'm gale' ter have yer whipporpy-snappin' round?"

The other clerks in the warehouse looked up. Paul's office-boy appeared, holding some white article.

"Penny says you could have had it last night if you'd let her keep," he said.

"All right," answered Paul, looking at the stocking. "Get it off!"

Dawes stood frustrated, helpless with rage. Mine! cursed round.

"Excuse me a minute," he said to Dawes, and he would have run downstairs.

"By God, I'll stop your gallop!" shouted the smith, staring him by the arm. He turned quickly.

"Hay! hay!" cried the office-boy, alarmed.

Thomas Jordan started out of his little glass office, and came running down the room.

"What's a-catter, what's a-catter?" he said, in his old man's deep voice.

"I'm just gale' ter sock this little —, that's all," said Dawes desperately.

"What do you mean?" snapped Thomas Jordan.

"What I say," said Dawes, but he hung fire.

Mine! was leaning against the counter, advanced, half grinning.

"What's it all about?" snapped Thomas Jordan.

"Couldn't say," said Paul, shaking his head and dragging his shoulders.

" Couldn't you, couldn't you! " cried Dawes, thrusting forward his hands, facing him, and staring him in.

" Have you finished? " cried the old man, strutting. " Get off about your business, and don't come here tsey in the morning. Dawes turned his big front slowly upon him.

" Tsey! " he said. " What's tsey? I'm no more tsey than you are! "

" We've heard that song before, " snapped the old man. " Now you get off, and don't be long about it. Can't' live with your meddling! "

The snarl looked down conspicuously on his employee. His hands, large, and green, and yet well shaped for his labour, worked restlessly. Paul remembered they were the hands of Clara's husband, and a flash of hate went through him.

" Get out before you're turned out! " snapped Thomas Jordan.

" Why, what'll turn me out? " said Dawes, beginning to retort.

Mr. Jordan started, stretched up to the ceiling, waving him off, snatching his stout little figure as the man, saying:

" Get off my premises—get off! "

His elbow touched Dawes' arm.

" Come off! " said the snarl, and with a jerk of the elbow he sent the little manufacturer staggering backwards.

Before anyone could help him, Thomas Jordan had collided with the heavy spring-door. It had given way, and let him crash down the hall-door steps into Fanny's room. There was a second of amazement; then men and girls were running. Dawes stood a moment looking heavily on the scene, then he took his departure.

Thomas Jordan was shaken and bruised, not otherwise hurt. He was, however, beside himself with rage. He dismissed Dawes from his employment, and threatened him for assault.

As the snarl Paul heard had to give evidence. Asked how the trouble began, he said:

" Dawes took occasion to laugh at me. Dawes and me because I accompanied her to the theatre one evening, then I threw some beer at him, and he wanted his revenge. "

" Cheever is famous! " ended the narrative.

The case was dismissed after the magistrate had told Dawes he thought him a dunce.

" You put the case away, " snapped Mr. Jordan to Paul.

" I don't think I did, " replied the latter. " Believe, you didn't really want a conviction, did you? "

" What do you think I took the case up for? "

" Well, " said Paul, " I'm sorry if I said the wrong thing! "

(Glen was also very angry.)

"Why need my name have been dragged in?" she said.

"Better speak it openly than leave it to be whispered."

"There was no need for anything at all," she declared.

"We are none the poorer," he said indifferently.

"You may not be," she said.

"And you?" he asked.

"I need never have been mentioned."

"I'm sorry," he said, but he did not sound sorry.

He said himself sadly: "She will come round." And she did.

He told his mother about the fall of Mr. Jordan and the trial of Dawn. Mrs. Morel watched him closely.

"And what do you think of it all?" she asked him.

"I think he's a fool," he said.

But he was very uncomfortable, nevertheless.

"Have you ever considered where it will end?" his mother said.

"No," he answered; "things work out of themselves."

"They do, as a very rare doesn't like, as a rule," said his mother.

"And then one has to put up with them," he said.

"You'd find you're not so good at 'putting up' as you imagine," she said.

He went on working rapidly at his design.

"Do you ever ask for opinion?" she said at length.

"What of?"

"Of you, and the whole thing."

"I don't care what her opinion of me is. She's fearfully in love with me, but it's not very deep."

"But quite as deep as your feeling for her."

He looked up at his mother calmly.

"Yes," he said. "You know, mother, I think there must be something the matter with me, that I can't love. When she's there, as a rule, I do love her. Sometimes, when I see her just as she comes, I love her, mother; but then, when she talks and behaves, I often don't love her."

"Yet that's as much worse as Miriam."

"Perhaps; and I love her better than Miriam. But why don't they hold me?"

The last question was almost a lamentation. His mother turned away her face, not looking across the room, very quiet, grown, with something of resignation.

"But you wouldn't want to marry Clara?" she said.

"Not at first perhaps I would. But why—why don't I want to marry her or anybody? I feel something as if I wronged my women, mother."

"How wronged there, my son?"

"I don't know."

He went on pointing rather despairingly, he had touched the quick of the truth.

"And as for wanting to marry," said his mother, "dare's plenty of time yet."

"But no, mother, I even love Clara, and I did Minnie, but up me myself to them in marriage I couldn't. I couldn't belong to them. They seem to want me, and I can't ever give it them."

"You haven't met the right woman."

"And I never shall meet the right woman while you live," he said.

She was very quiet. Now she began to feel again tired, as if she were alone.

"We'll see, my son," she answered.

The feeling that things were going as a circle made her sad.

Clara was, indeed, passionately in love with him, and he with her, as far as passion went. In the daytime he forgot her a good deal. She was working in the same building, but he was not aware of it. He was busy, and her entrance was of no matter to him. But all the time she was in her special room she had a sense that he was upstairs, a physical sense of his person in the same building. Every second she expected him to come through the door, and when he came it was a shock to her. But he was often absent and offhand with her. He gave her his directions in an official manner, looking her as boy. Even what was the least left she listened to him. She dared not misunderstand or fail to remember, but it was a cruelty to her. She wanted to touch his chest. She knew exactly how his breast was shaped under the waistcoat, and she wanted to touch it. It saddened her to hear his mechanical voice giving orders about the work. She wanted to break through the chain of it, smash the metal coating of business which covered him with hardness, get at the man again: but she was afraid, and before she could feel one touch of his warmth he was gone, and she stood again.

He knew that she was dreary every evening she did not see him, so he gave her a good deal of his time. The days were often a misery to her, but the evenings and the nights were usually a bliss to them both. Then they were alone. For hours they sat together, or walked together in the dark, and talked only a few, always unmeaning words. But he had her hand in his, and her breast felt its warmth in his chest, making him feel whole.

One morning they were walking down by the canal, and something was troubling her. She knew she had not got him. All the

close he whistled softly and persistently to himself. She guessed, feeling she could learn more from his whistling than from his speech. It was a sad drowsed tone—a tone that made her feel he would not stay with her. She walked on in silence. When they came to the swing bridge he sat down on the great pile, looking at the stars in the water. He was a long way from her. She had been thinking.

"Will you always stay at Jordan's?" she asked.

"No," he answered without reflecting. "No, I'll leave Nottingham and go abroad—soon."

"Go abroad! What for?"

"I don't know. I feel restless."

"But what shall you do?"

"I shall have to get some steady designing work, and some sort of sale for my pictures first," he said. "I am gradually making my way. I know I am."

"And when do you think you'll go?"

"I don't know. I shall hardly go for long, while there's my mother."

"You wouldn't leave her?"

"Not for long."

She looked at the stars in the black water. There lay very white and staring. It was an agony to know he would leave her, but it was almost an agony to have him near her.

"And if you made a great lot of money, what would you do?" she asked.

"Go somewhere to a pretty house near London with my mother."

"I see."

There was a long pause.

"I could still come and see you," he said. "I don't know. Don't ask me what I should do, I don't know."

There was a silence. The stars shimmered and broke upon the water. There came a breath of wind. He went suddenly to her, and put his hand on her shoulder.

"Don't ask me anything about the future," he said emphatically.

"I don't know anything. Be with me now, tell me, no matter what it is!"

And she took him in her arms. After all, she was a married woman, and she had no right over to what he gave her. He needed her badly. She had him in her arms, and he was reasonable. With her warmth she folded him over, cradled him, loved him. She would let the minutes stand for itself.

After a moment he lifted his head as if he wanted to speak.

"Clara," he said struggling.

She caught him passionately to her, pressed his head down on her breast with her hand. She could not hear the suffering in his voice. She was afraid in her soul. She might have anything of her own things; but she did not want to know. She felt she could not bear it. She wanted him to be comforted upon her—soothed. She stood clasping him and caressing him, and he was something unknown to her—something almost unknown. She wanted to soothe him into forgetfulness.

And once the struggle was down in his soul, and he forgot. But then Clara was not there for him, only a woman, weary, something he loved and almost worshipped, there in the dark. But it was not Clara, and she submitted to him. The naked hunger and inevitability of his loving her, something strong and blind and ruthless in its primitiveness, made the hour almost terrible to her. She knew how stark and alone he was, and she felt it was great that he came to her, and she took him simply because his need was bigger rather than her or love, and her soul was still within her. She did that for him in his need even if he left her, for she loved him.

All the while the parrots were screaming in the field. When he came to, he wondered what was near his eyes, carving and strong with life in the dark, and what voice it was speaking. Then he realized it was the grass, and the parrots were calling. The warmth was Clara's breathing hovering. He lifted his head, and looked into her eyes. They were dark and shining and strange, life wild at the source staring into his life, stranger to him, yet meeting him; and he put his face down on her throat, afraid. What was she? A strong, strange, wild life, that breathed with his in the darkness through the hour. It was all so much bigger than themselves that he was crushed. They had met, and included in the meeting the forest of the marshy grass-roots, the cry of the parrots, the wheel of the stars.

When they stood up they saw other lovers stealing down the opposite hedge. It seemed natural they were there; the night contained them.

And after such an evening they both were very still, having known the community of passion. They felt small, half afraid, childlike, and wondering like Adam and Eve when they lost their innocence and realized the magnificence of the power which drove them out of Paradise and across the great night and the great day of humanity. It was for each of them an initiation and a satisfaction. To know their own nothingness, to know the tremendous living food which carried them always, gave them out within themselves.



If so great a magnificent power could overtake them, identify them altogether with itself, so that they knew they were only grass on the boundless heave that lifted every grain-blade to its height, and every tree, and living thing, then why fret about themselves? They could let themselves be carried by life, and they felt a sort of peace such as the other. There was a well-being which they had had together. Nothing could satisfy it, nothing could release it easily; it was always there behind a life.

But Clara was not satisfied. Something great was there, she knew, something great enveloped her. But it did not keep her. In the evening it was not the same. They had known, but this could not keep the moment. She wanted it again; she wanted something permanent. She had not realized fully. She thought it was life which she wanted. He was not able to live. This she had seen between them might never be again; he might leave her. She had not got him; she was not satisfied. Life had been there, but she had not gripped the—she something—she knew not what—what she was used to have.

In the morning he had considerable peace, and was happy in himself. It seemed almost as if he had known the happiness of her in peace, and it left him at rest. But it was not Clara. It was something that happened because of her, but it was not her. They were seriously and intensely each other. It was as if they had been lifted again of a great force.

When she saw him that day at the factory her heart ached like a deep of fire. It was his body, his breath. The deep of the great heaven in her breast, she must hold her. But he, very quiet, very subdued this morning, went on giving his nervousness. She followed him into the dark, ugly basement, and lifted her arms to him. He kissed her, and the intensity of passion began to burn him again. Somebody was at the door. He rose upstairs; she returned to her room, moving as if in a trance.

After that the fire slowly went down. His life more and more that her experience had been imperfect, and not Clara. He loved her. There was a big tenderness, as after a strong emotion they had known together; but it was not she who could keep his soul steady. He had wanted her to be something she could not be.

And she was used with desire of him. She could not see him without reaching him. In the factory, as he talked to her about spinal bone, she ran her hand secretly along his side. She followed him out upon the basement for a quick kiss; her eyes, always moist and yearning, full of unimagined passion, she kept fixed on his. He was afraid of her, but she should too fearfully give herself away before the other girls. She secretly waited for him at

down—down for him to embrace her before she went. He felt as if she were helpless, almost a burden to him, and it irritated him.

"But what do you always want to be kissing and embracing for?" he said. "Surely there's a time for everything."

She looked up at him, and the heat came into her eyes.

"Do I always want to be kissing you?" she said.

"Always, even if I came to ask you about the work. I don't want anything to do with love when I'm at work. Which's work now?"

"And what is love?" she asked. "How is to have special hours?"

"Yes; out of work hours."

"And you'll regulate it according to his Jordan's closing time?"

"Yes; and according to the freedom from business of my own."

"It is only to exist in spare time?"

"That's all, and not always there—not the lasting sort of love."

"And that's all you think of?"

"It's quite enough."

"I'm glad you think so."

And she was cold to him for some time—she hated him; and while she was cold and contemptuous, he was uneasy till she had forgiven him again. But when they started afresh they were not any nearer. He kept her because he never released her.

In the evening they went together to the cinema. They had rooms at a little cottage near Theddenhorpe, and lived as man and wife. Mrs. Radford sometimes went with them.

It was known in Nottingham that Paul Morel and Mrs. Dawson were going together, but as nothing was very obvious, and Clara was always a solitary person, and he seemed so simple and innocent, it did not make much difference.

He loved the Lincolnshire coast, and she loved the sea. In the early morning they often went out together to bathe. The grey of the dunes, the fan, dainty ripples of the finished sea with white, the sea-meadow rank with herbage, were thick enough to rejoice his soul. As they stepped on to the highroad from their plank bridge, and looked round at the molten monotony of levels, the land a little darker than the sky, the sea sounding small beyond the meadow, his heart filled strong with the sweeping solacelessness of life. She loved him then. He was solitary and strong, and his eyes had a beautiful light.

They chuckled with child when he raised her down the road to the green turf bridge. She could run well. Her colour soon came, her throat was bare, her eyes shone. He loved her for being so humorously heavy, and yet so quick. Harold was light; she

went with a beautiful rush. They grew warm, and walked hand in hand.

A flash came into the sky, the sun moon, half-way down the west, and into insignificance. On the shadowy land sharp began to take life, plants with great leaves became damask. They came through a pass in the fog, cold sensibly on to the beach. The long waste of forebent lay moaning under the dunes and the sea; the ocean was a flat dark strip with a white edge. Over the gloomy sea the sky grew red. Quickly the fire spread among the clouds and scattered them. Cranes began to crouch, crows to dull gold, and in a golden gleam the sun came up, debbling heavily over the waves in little splashes, as if someone had gone along and the light had spilled from her gulf as she walked.

The breakers ran down the shore as long, hoarse strokes. Tiny eagles, like specks of spray, wheeled above the line of surf. Their crying seemed larger than they. Far away the coast rushed out, and melted into the evening, the towering sandhills seemed to sink to a level with the beach. Mablesnaps was dry on their right. They had above the space of all the level shore, the sea, and the opening run, the flume noise of the waves, the sharp-crying of the gulls.

They had a warm hollow in the sandhills where the wind did not come. He stood looking out to sea.

"It's very fine," he said.

"Now don't get sentimental," she said.

It irritated her to see him standing gazing at the sea, like a solitary and poetic person. He laughed. She quickly undressed.

"There are some fine views this evening," she said triumphantly.

She was a better woman than he; he stood idly watching her.

"Aren't you coming?" she said.

"In a minute," he answered.

She was white and velvet skinned, with heavy shoulders. A little wind, coming from the sea, blew across her body and ruffled her hair.

The evening was of a lovely limpid gold colour. Walls of shadow seemed to be drifting away on the north and the north. Clara stood shivering slightly from the touch of the wind, twisting her hair. The sea-grass ran behind the white striped woman. She glanced at the sea, then looked at him. He was watching her with dark eyes which she loved and could not understand. She laughed her breasts between her arms, wringing, laughing.

"Oh, it will be so cold!" she said.

He bent forward and kissed her, held her suddenly close, and

aimed her again. She stood waiting. He looked into her eyes, then away at the pale sands.

"Go, then?" he said quietly.

She flung her arms round his neck, drew him against her, kissed him passionately, and went, saying:

"But you'll come in?"

"In a minute."

She went plodding heavily over the sand that was soft as velvet. He, on the sandhills, watched the great pale ocean swaying her. She grew smaller, her proportions, viewed only like a huge white bird taking forward.

"Not much more than a big white pebble on the beach, not much more than a clot of . . . in being blown and rolled over the sand," he said to himself.

She seemed to move very slowly across the vast surrounding shore. As he watched, he lost her. She was denied out of sight by the surf-line. Again, he saw her, the nearest white speck moving against the white, misty sea-ridge.

"Look how little she is!" he said to himself. "She's lost like a grain of sand in the beach—just a concentrated speck blown along, a dry white foam-bubble, almost nothing among the morning. Why does she attract me?"

The morning was altogether uninterrupted. She was gone in the water. Far and wide the beach, the sandhills with their blue surf-line, the shining water, glowed together in immense, unbroken whiteness.

"What is she, after all?" he said to himself. "Here's the sweetest morning, big and permanent and beautiful; there is she, flitting, always unconscious and temporary as a bubble of foam. What does she mean to me, after all? She represents something, like a bubble of foam represents the sea. But what is she? It's not her I care for."

Then, started by his own unconscious thoughts, that seemed to speak so distinctly, that all the morning could hear, he undressed and ran quickly down the sands. She was waiting for him. Her arms flung up to him, she leaned on a wave, exposed, her shoulder in a pool of liquid silver. He jumped through the breakers, and in a moment her hand was on his shoulder.

He was a poor swimmer, and could not stay long in the water. She played round him in triumph, sporting with her superiority, which he begrudged her. The sunbath stood deep and blue on the water. They laughed in the sea for a minute or two, then raced each other back to the sandhills.

When they were drying themselves, panting heavily, he watched

her laughing, breathless face, her height-shoulders, her breasts that quivered and made him frightened as she rubbed them, and he thought again:

"But she is magnificent, and even bigger than the sunning and the sea. Is she—? Is she—?"

She, seeing his dark eyes fixed on her, broke off from her drying with a laugh.

"What are you looking at?" she said.

"You," he answered, laughing.

Her eyes met his, and in a moment he was kissing her white "goose-fleshed" shoulder, and thinking—

"What is she? What is she?"

She loved him in the morning. There was something detached, hard, and elemental about his kisses then, as if he were only conscious of his own will, not in the least of her and her wanting him.

Later in the day he went out sketching.

"Yes," he said to her, "go with your mother to Sutton. I am so dull."

She stood and looked at him. He knew she wanted to come with him, but he preferred to be alone. She made him feel imprisoned when she was there, as if he could not get a free deep breath, as if there were something on top of him. She left his desire to be free of her.

In the evening he came back to her. They walked down the shore in the darkness, then sat for awhile in the shelter of the medlar.

"In summer," she said, as they stared over the darkness of the sea, where no light was to be seen—"it seemed as if you only loved me at night—as if you didn't love me in the daytime."

He ran the cold sand through his fingers, feeling gritty under the accusation.

"The night is free to you," he replied. "In the daytime I want to be by myself."

"But why?" she said. "Why, even now, when we are on this short holiday?"

"I don't know. Love-making suits me in the daytime."

"But it needn't always be love-making," she said.

"It always is," he answered, "when you and I are together." She sat looking very loose.

"Do you ever want to marry me?" he asked curiously.

"Do you not?" she replied.

"Yes, yes. I should like us to have children," he answered slowly.

She sat with her head bent, fingering the sand.

"But you don't really want a divorce from Baxter, do you?" he said.

It was some minutes before she replied.

"No," she said, very deliberately, "I don't think I do."

"Why?"

"I don't know."

"Do you feel as if you belonged to him?"

"No, I don't think so."

"What, then?"

"I think he belongs to me," she replied.

He was silent for some minutes, listening to the wind blowing over the house, dark sea.

"And you never really intended to belong to me?" he said.

"Yes, I do belong to you," she answered.

"No," he said, "because you don't want to be divorced."

It was a knot they could not untie, so they left it, took what they could get, and what they could not again they ignored.

"I consider you treated Baxter honestly," he said another time.

He had expected Clara to answer him, as his mother would:

"You consider your own affairs, and don't know so much about other people's." But she took him seriously, almost to his own surprise.

"Why?" she said.

"I suppose you thought he was a lily of the valley, and so you put him in an appropriate pot, and tended him accordingly. You made up your mind he was a lily of the valley, and it was no good his being a corn-pumpkin. You wouldn't have it."

"I certainly never imagined him a lily of the valley."

"You imagined him something he wasn't. That's just what a woman is. She thinks she knows what's good for a man, and she's going to see he gets it, and no matter if he's marring, he may as well whistle for what he needs, while she's got him, and is giving him what's good for him."

"And what are you doing?" she asked.

"I'm thinking what some I shall whistle," he laughed.

And instead of leaving her ears, she considered him in earnest.

"You think I want to give you what's good for you?" she asked.

"I hope so; but how should give a slave of freedom, out of prison. Ministers made me feel tied up like a donkey, to a stable. I must feed on hay patch, and swallow chaff. Unwhistening!"

"And would you let a woman do as she likes?"

"Yes, I'll say that she likes to love me. If she doesn't—well, I don't hold her."

"If you were as wonderful as you say—," replied Clara

"I should be the master I am," he laughed.

There was a silence in which they hated each other, though they laughed.

"Love's a dog on the string," he said.

"And which of us is the dog?" she asked.

"Oh well, you, of course."

So there went on a battle between them. She knew the master fully had him. Some part, big and vital in him, she had no hold over; nor did she ever try to get it, as soon to realize what it was. And he knew in some way that she held herself still as before. Down she did not lose. Down, never had loved him; but she believed he loved her, at least depended on her. She felt a certain safety about him that she never felt with Paul Morel. Her passion for the young man had killed her soul, given her a certain satisfaction, eased her of her self-mistrust, her doubt. Whatever she she was, she was inwardly assured. It was almost as if she had gained love's, and stood now distinct and complete. She had received her confirmation; but she never believed that her life belonged to Paul Morel, nor his to her. They would separate in the end, and the rest of her life would be an ache after him. But at any rate, she knew now, she was sure of herself. And she never could almost be sure of him. Together they had received the baptism of life, each through the other, but now their motions were separate. Where he wanted to go she could not come with him. They would have to part sooner or later. Even if they married, and were faithful to each other, still he would have to leave her, go on alone, and she would only have to stand in him when he came home. But it was not possible. Each wanted a more to go side by side with.

Clara had gone to live with her mother upon Muggsley Field. One evening, as Paul and she were walking along Woodborough Road, they met Dawes. Morel knew something about the hearing of the man approaching, but he was absorbed to be thinking in the moment, so that only his artist's eye watched the form of the stranger. Then he suddenly turned to Clara with a laugh, and put his hand on her shoulder, saying, laughing:

"But we walk side by side, and yet I'm in London arguing with an imaginary Orestes; and where are you?"

At that instant Dawes passed, almost smothering Morel. The young man glanced, saw the dark brows open hunting, full of hate and yet tired.

"Who was that?" he asked of Clara.

"It was Dawes," she replied.

Paul took his hand from her shoulder and glanced round; then

He saw again distinctly the man's form as it approached him. Dwyer said walked erect, with his two shoulders flung back, and he wore black; but there was a shadowy look in his eyes that gave one the impression he was trying to get someone past even, perhaps he was, glancing suspiciously to see what they thought of him. And his hands seemed to be wanting to hold. He wore old clothes, the trousers were torn at the knee, and the handkerchief tied round his throat was dirty, but his cap was still defiantly over one eye. As she saw him, Clara felt guilty. There was a sadness and gloom on his face that made her hate him, because it hurt her.

"He looks steady," said Paul.

But the note of pity in his voice reproached her, and made her feel hard.

"His own common-sense comes out," she answered.

"Do you hate him?" he asked.

"You talk," she said, "about the cruelty of women; I wish you knew the cruelty of men in their brute force. They simply don't know that the woman exists."

"That's it?" he said.

"No," she answered.

"Don't I know you talk?"

"About me you know nothing," she said bitterly—"about me!"

"Not more than Baxter knows?" he asked.

"Perhaps not so much."

He felt puzzled, and helpless, and angry. There she walked unknown to him, though they had been through such experiences together.

"But you know me pretty well," he said.

She did not answer.

"Did you know Baxter as well as you know me?" he asked.

"He wouldn't let me," she said.

"And I have let you know me?"

"It's what men won't let you do. They won't let you get really near to them," she said.

"And haven't I let you?"

"Yes," she answered slowly; "but you've never come near to me. You can't come out of yourself, you can't. Baxter could do that better than you."

He walked on pondering. He was angry with her for producing Baxter to him.

"You begin to value Baxter now you've met him," he said.

"No, I can only see where he was different from you."



But he felt she had a grudge against him.

One evening, as they were coming home over the fields, she startled him by asking:

"Do you think it's worth ~~the~~—the ~~the~~ part?"

"The act of loving, itself?"

"Yes, is it worth anything to you?"

"But how can you separate it?" he said. "It's the substance of everything. All our ordinary existence then."

"Not for me," she said.

He was silent. A flash of pain for her came up. After all, she was disappointed with him, even there, where he thought they fulfilled each other. But he believed her too implicitly.

"I feel," she continued slowly, "as if I hadn't got you, as if all of you weren't there, and as if it weren't as you were nothing—"

"Who, then?"

"Something just for yourself. It has been like, so that I haven't think of it. But is it as you want, or is it *it*?"

He again felt guilty. Did he love Clara out of *conscience*, and make simply *woman*? But he thought that was splitting a hair.

"When I had Baxter, actually had him, then I *did* feel as if I had all of him," she said.

"And it was better?" he asked.

"Yes, yes, it was most whole. I don't say you haven't given me more than he ever gave me."

"Or could give you."

"Yes, perhaps; but you've never given me yourself."

He kissed her brow angrily.

"If I start to make love to you," he said, "I just go like a leaf down the wind."

"And leave me out of court," she said.

"And then is it nothing to you?" he asked, almost rigid with despair.

"It's something; and sometimes you have carried me away—right away—I ~~know~~—~~made~~—I remember you for a—~~has~~—"

"Don't! but" *she*, he said, leaving her quickly, as a fire ran through him.

She subsided, and was silent.

It was true as he said. As a rule, when he started love-making, the emotion was strong enough to carry with it everything—reason, soul, blood—in a great sweep, like the Tibet current bodily its backwaters and undercurrents, suddenly. Gradually the first ardours, the body sensations, were lost, thought also went, everything borne along as you *float*. He became, not a man with a mind, but a great instinct. His hands were like creatures,

Bring his limbs, his body, were all life and consciousness, subject to no will of his, but living in themselves. Just as he was, so it seemed the vigorous, wintry man were strong also with him. He and they struck with the same pulse of life, and the same joy of strength which held the iron-bound staff near his eyes held his own body firm. It was as if he, and the stem, and the dark herbage, and Clara were huddled up in an immense sphere of force, which tore onwards and upwards. Everything rushed along in living heads long, everything was soft, perfect as wool, along with him. This wonderful fitness in each thing in itself, while it was being borne along in a very ecstasy of living, seemed the highest point of bliss.

And Clara knew that held him to her, so she trusted altogether to the passion. It, however, failed her very often. They did not often reach again the height of that once when the poems had called. Gradually some mechanical effort spoiled their loving, or, when they had splendid moments, they had them separately, and not so satisfactorily. So often he resumed merely to be running on alone; often they realised it had been a failure, not what they had wanted. He left her, knowing that evening had only made a little rift between them. Their loving grew more mechanical, without the marvellous gleams. Gradually they began to introduce necessities, to get back some of the feeling of satisfaction. They would be very near, almost dangerously near to the river, so that the black water ran not far from his face, and it gave a little thrill; or they loved sometimes in a little hollow below the fence of the park where people were passing occasionally, on the edge of the town, and they heard footsteps coming, almost felt the vibration of the tread, and they heard what the passers-by said—strange little things that were never intended to be heard. And afterwards each of them was rather ashamed, and these things caused a distance between the two of them. He began to despise her a little, as if she worried at

One night he left her to go to Daybrook Station over the fields. It was very dark, with an orange of snow, although the spring was so far advanced. Mired had not much time, he plunged forward. The town ceased almost abruptly on the edge of a steep hollow; above the houses with their yellow lights stood up against the darkness. He went over the stile, and dropped quickly into the hollow of the fields. Under the orchard one white window glowed in Switzerland Farm. Paul glanced round. Behind, the houses, moved on the tops of the dip, black against the sky, like wild beasts glaring sideways with yellow eyes down into the darkness. It was the town that seemed strange and unworldly, gleaming on the

doubt at the back of him. Some creature stirred under the willows of the farm pond. It was too dark to distinguish anything.

He was close up to the misty side before he saw a dark shape leaning against it. The man moved aside.

"Good-evening!" he said.

"Good-evening!" Marcel answered, not looking.

"Paul's dead?" said the man.

Then he knew it was Dawson. The man stopped his way.

"I've got yer, have I?" he said suddenly.

"I don't mean any harm," said Paul.

He could see nothing of Dawson's face. The man's teeth seemed to chatter as he talked.

"You're going to get it from me now," said Dawson.

Marcel attempted to move forward, the other man stopped in front of him.

"Are yer goin' to take that top-coat off," he said, "or are yer goin' to lie down to it?"

Paul was afraid the man was mad.

"But," he said, "I don't know how to fight."

"All right, then," answered Dawson, and before the younger man knew where he was he was staggering backwards from a blow across the face.

The whole night went black. He tore off his overcoat and coat, dodging a blow, and flung the garments over Dawson. The latter wore savagely. Marcel, in his shirt-sleeves, was now alone and defenseless. He felt his whole body underneath itself like a claw. He could not fight, so he would use his wit. The other man became more distinct to him; he could see particularly the side-beard. Dawson stumbled over Paul's coat, then came rushing forward. The young man's mouth was bleeding. It was the other man's mouth he was dying to get at, and the desire was against him in strength. He stepped quickly through the mist, and as Dawson was coming through after him like a flash he got a blow in over the other's mouth. He shivered with pleasure. Dawson advanced slowly, spacing. Paul was afraid; he moved round to get to the side again. Suddenly, from out of nowhere, came a great blow against his ear, that sent him falling helpless backwards. He heard Dawson's heavy panting, like a wild beast's; then came a kick on the knee, giving him such agony that he got up and, quite blind, kept close under his enemy's guard. He felt blows and kicks, but they did not hurt. He hung on to the bigger man like a wild cat, till at last Dawson fell with a crash, losing his presence of mind. Paul went down with him. Pure instinct brought his hands to the man's neck, and before Dawson, in frenzy and agony, could wrench

him free, he had got his arm twisted in the sand and his knuckles dug in the throat of the other man. He was a pure instinct, without reason or feeling. His body, hard and wonderful in itself, closed against the struggling body of the other man, and a muscle in his relaxed. He was quite unconscious, only his body had taken upon itself to kill this other man. For himself, he had neither feeling nor reason. He lay passed hand against his adversary, his body adjusting itself to its one pure purpose of choking the other man, resting merely at the right moment, with exactly the right amount of strength, the struggle of the other, when, instant, unchanging, gradually pressing its knuckles deeper, feeling the struggle of the other body become wilder and more intense. Tighter and tighter grew his body, like a screw that is gradually increasing its pressure, till something broke.

Then suddenly he relaxed, full of wonder and mingling. Dune had been yielding. Mene felt his body flame with pain, as he realized what he was doing; he was all bewildered. Dune's struggles suddenly removed themselves in a furious spasm. Foe's hands were writhed, torn out of the stuff in which they were locked, and he was flung away, helpless. He heard the hoarse sound of the other's grating, but he lay stunned, dazed, still dazed, he felt the blows of the other's feet, and lost consciousness.

Dune, grating with pain like a beast, was kicking the prostrate body of his rival. Suddenly the wheels of the train crashed two fields away. He turned round and glared suspiciously. What was coming? He saw the light of the train draw across his vision. It seemed to him people were approaching. He made off across the field into Nottingham, and dazed as his consciousness as he went, he felt on his face the place where his head had knocked against one of the loco's boxes. The knock seemed to shake the inside bone, he hurried to get away from it.

Mene gradually came to himself. He knew where he was and what had happened, but he did not want to move. He lay still, with tiny bits of snow sticking his face. It was pleasant to be quite, quite still. The time passed. It was the bits of snow that kept rousing him when he did not want to be roused. At last he will flicked his eyes.

"I won't be here," he said; "it's silly."

But still he did not move.

"I said I was going to get up," he repeated. "Why don't I?"

And still it was some time before he had sufficiently pulled himself together to stir; then gradually he got up. Pain made him sick and dazed, but his brain was clear. Realizing, he groped for his coat and got them on, buttoning his overcoat up to his ears.

It was some time before he found his cup. He did not know whether his face was still bleeding. Walking blindly, every step making him sick with pain, he went back to the pond and washed his face and hands. The icy water hurt, but helped to bring him back to himself. He crawled back up the hill to the train. He wanted to get to his mother—he must get to his mother—that was his blind intention. He covered his face as much as he could, and struggled weakly along. Gradually the ground seemed to fall away from him as he walked, and he felt himself dropping with a sickening feeling into space; so, like a nightmare, he got through with the journey home.

Everybody was in bed. He looked at himself. His face was discoloured and smeared with blood, almost like a dead man's face. He washed it, and went to bed. The night went by in delirium. In the morning he found his mother looking at him. Her blue eyes—they were all he wanted to see. She was there; he was in her hands.

"It's not much, mother," he said. "It was Baxter Dawson."

"Tell me where it hurts you," she said quietly.

"I don't know—my shoulder. Say it was a bicycle accident, mother."

He could not move his arm. Presently Miriam, the little servant came upstairs with some tea.

"Your mother's nearly frightened me out of my wits—fainted away," she said.

He felt he could not bear it. His mother turned him; he told her about it.

"And now I should have done with them all," she said quietly.

"I will, mother."

She covered him up.

"And don't think about it," she said—"only try to go to sleep. The doctor won't be here till eleven."

He had a discoloured shoulder, and the second day acute tendinitis set in. His mother was pale to death now, and very thin. She would sit and look at him, then away into space. There was something between them that neither dared mention. Clara came to see him. Afterwards he said to his mother.

"She makes me tired, mother."

"Yes, I wish she wouldn't come," Mrs. Morel replied.

Another day Miriam came, but she seemed almost like a stranger to him.

"You know, I don't care about them, mother," he said.

"I'm afraid you don't, my son," she replied sadly.

It was given out everywhere it was a bicycle accident. Soon he

was able to go to work again, but now there was a constant sickness and gnawing at his heart. He went to Clara, but there seemed, as it were, nobody there. He could not work. He and his mother seemed almost to avoid each other. There was some secret between them which they could not bear. He was not aware of it. He only knew that his life seemed unbalanced, as if it were going to smash into pieces.

Clara did not know what was the matter with him. She realised that he seemed unaware of her. Even when he came to her he seemed unaware of her; always he was somewhere else. She felt she was clutching for him, and he was somewhere else. It tortured her, and so she tortured him. For a month at a time she kept him at arm's length. He almost hated her, and was driven to her in spite of himself. He went greatly into the company of men, was always at the George or the White Horse. His mother was ill, distant, quiet, shadowy. He was terrified of something; he dared not look at her. Her eyes seemed to grow darker, her face more weary; still she dragged about at her work.

At Whincliffe he said he would go to Blackpool for four days with his friend Newton. The latter was a big, jolly fellow, with a touch of the brawler about him. Paul said his mother must go to Sheffield to stay a week with Anne, who lived there. Perhaps the change would do her good—Mrs. Merril was attending a woman's doctor in Nottingham. He said her heart and her digestion were wrong. She consented to go to Sheffield, though she did not want to; but now she would do everything her son wished of her. Paul said he would come for her on the fifth day, and stay also in Sheffield till the holiday was up. It was agreed.

The two young men set off gaily for Blackpool. Mrs. Merril was quite lively as Paul bused her and told her. Once at the station, he forgot everything. Four days were done—not an anxiety, not a struggle. The two young men simply enjoyed themselves. Paul was like another man. None of himself remained—no Clara, no Miriam, no mother that feared him. He wrote to them all, and long letters to his mother; but they were jolly letters that made her laugh. He was having a good time, as young fellows will in a place like Blackpool. And underneath it all was a shadow for her.

Paul was very gay, excited at the thought of staying with his mother in Sheffield. Newton was to spend the day with them. Their meal was late. Joking, laughing, with their pipes between their teeth, the young men waving their legs on to the train-car. Paul had bought his mother a little collar of real lion that he wanted to see her wear, so that he could stare her about it.

Annie lived in a river house, and had a little maid. Fred ran gaily up the steps. He expected his mother laughing in the hall, but it was Annie who opened to him. She seemed distant to him. He stood a second in dismay. Annie let him kiss her cheek.

"Is my mother ill?" he said.

"Yes, she's not very well. Don't upset her."

"Is she in bed?"

"Yes."

And then the queer feeling went over him, as if all the sunshine had gone out of him, and it was all shadow. He dropped the bag and ran upstairs. Knocking, he opened the door. His mother sat up in bed, wearing a dressing-gown of old rose colour. She looked at him almost as if she were ashamed of herself, pleading to him, humble. He saw the ruby look about her.

"Mother!" he said.

"I thought you were never coming," she answered gaily.

But he only fell on his knees at the bedside, and buried his face in the bedclothes, crying in agony, and saying:

"Mother—mother—mother!"

She touched his hair slowly with her thin hand.

"Don't cry," she said. "Don't cry—it's nothing."

But he felt as if his blood was smiting into tears, and he cried in terror and pain.

"Don't—don't cry," his mother filtered.

Slowly she stroked his hair. Shocked out of himself, he cried, and the tears hurt in every fibre of his body. Suddenly he stopped, but he dared not lift his face out of the bedclothes.

"You are late. Where have you been?" his mother asked.

"The train was late," he replied, muffled in the sheet.

"Yes, that miserable General. Is Newton come?"

"Yes."

"I'm sure you must be hungry, and they've kept dinner waiting."

With a wrench he looked up at her.

"What is it, mother?" he asked bravely.

She averted his eyes as she answered:

"Only a bit of a rumour, my boy. You needn't trouble. It's been there—the Army has—long since."

Up came the train again. His mind was clear and hard, but his body was crying.

"Where?" he said.

She put her hand on her side.

"Here. But you know they can send a rumour away."

He stood feeling dazed and helpless, like a child. He thought

perhaps it was as she said. Yet, he reassured himself it was so, that all the while his blood and his body knew definitely what it was. He sat down on the bed, and took her hand. She had never had that old ring—her wedding-ring.

"When were you poorer?" he asked.

"It was yesterday it began," she answered automatically.

"Poor?"

"Yes, but not more than I've often had at home. I believe Dr. Arnold is an attorney."

"You ought not to have travelled alone," he said, to himself more than to her.

"As if that had anything to do with it!" she answered quickly. They were silent for a while.

"Now go and have your dinner," she said. "You must be hungry."

"Have you had yours?"

"Yes; a beautiful one I had. Annie is good to me."

They talked a little while, then he went downstairs. He was very white and strained. Nowton sat in across his sympathy.

After dinner he went into the study to help Annie to wash up. The little maid had gone on an errand.

"Is it really a tumour?" he asked.

Annie began to cry again.

"The pain she had yesterday—I never saw anybody suffer like it!" she cried. "Leonard runs like a madman for Dr. Arnold, and when she'd got to bed she said to me: 'Annie, look at that lump on my side. I wonder what it is!' And there I looked, and I thought I should have dropped. Paul, as true as I'm here, it's a lump as big as my double fist. I said: 'Good goodness, mother, whenever did that come?' 'What, child,' she said, 'it's been there a long time.' I thought I should have died, our Paul, I did. She's been having these pains for months at home, and nobody looking after her."

The tears came to his eyes, then dried suddenly.

"But she's been standing the doctor in Hoxingham—and she never told me," he said.

"If I'd been at home," said Annie, "I should have seen the appeal!"

He felt like a man walking in unconsciousness. In the afternoon he went to see the doctor. The latter was a shrewd, kindly man.

"But what is it?" he said.

The doctor looked at the young man, then lifted his fingers.

"It may be a large tumour which has formed in the membrane," he said slowly, "and which we may be able to make go away."



"Can't you operate?" asked Paul.

"Not there," replied the doctor.

"Are you sure?"

"Quite."

Paul meditated a while.

"Are you sure it's a tumour?" he asked. "Why did Dr. Jamison at Nottingham never find out anything about it? She's been going to him for weeks, and he's treated her for heart and indigestion."

"Mrs. Maud never told Dr. Jamison about the lump," said the doctor.

"And do you *know* it's a tumour?"

"No, I am not sure."

"What strength is it? You asked my sister if there was cancer in the family. Might it be cancer?"

"I don't know."

"And what shall you do?"

"I should like an examination, with Dr. Jamison."

"Then leave me."

"You must arrange about that. The fee wouldn't be less than ten guineas to come here from Nottingham."

"When would you like him to come?"

"I will call in this evening, and we will talk it over."

Paul went away, touching his lip.

His mother could sense something for her, the doctor said. Her son was upstairs to help her. She wore the old-rune dressing-gown that Leonard had given Anna, and, with a little colour in her face, was quite young again.

"But you look quite pretty in that," he said.

"Yes, they make me so free, I hardly know myself," she answered.

But when she stood up to walk, the colour went. Paul helped her, half-carrying her. At the top of the stairs she was gone. He lifted her up and carried her gently downstairs; laid her on the couch. She was light and frail. Her face looked as if she were dead, with the blue lips that sight. Her eyes opened—her blue unshining eyes—and she looked at him pleadingly, almost warning him to forgive her. He held loosely to her lips, but her mouth would not open. All the time she watched him lovingly. She was only sorry for him. The tears ran down his face without crying, but not a muscle moved. He was intent on getting a little brandy between her lips. Down she was able to swallow a teaspoonful. She lay back, so used. The tears continued to run down his face.

"But," she pointed, "it'll go off. Don't cry!"

"I'm not doing," he said.

After a while she was better again. He was kneeling beside the couch. They looked into each other's eyes.

"I don't want you to make a trouble of it," she said.

"No, mother. You'd have to be quite still, and then you'd get better soon."

But he was wrong in the legs, and their eyes as they looked at each other understood. Her eyes were as blue—such a wonderful forget-not-not blue! He felt if only they had been of a different colour he could have borne it better. His heart seemed to be ripping slowly in his breast. He knelted there, holding her hand, and neither said anything. Then Annie came in.

"Are you all right?" she murmured tenderly to her mother.

"Of course," said Mrs. Moor.

Paul sat down and told her about Blackpool. She was curious. A day or two after, he went to see Dr. Jackson in Nottingham, to arrange for a consultation. Paul had practically no money in the world. But he could borrow.

His mother had been used to go to the public consultations on Saturday morning, while she could see the doctor for only a nominal sum. Her son went on the same day. The waiting-room was full of poor women, who sat patiently on a bench around the wall. Paul thought of his mother, in her little black costume, sitting waiting like this. The doctor was late. The women all looked rather frightened. Paul asked the nurse in attendance if he could see the doctor immediately he came. It was arranged so. The women sitting patiently round the walls of the room eyed the young man curiously.

At last the doctor came. He was about forty, good-looking, brown-skinned. His wife had died, and he, who had loved her, had specialised on women's ailments. Paul told his name and his mother's. The doctor did not remember.

"Number twenty-four," said the nurse, and the doctor looked up the case in his book.

"There is a big lump that may be a cancer," said Paul. "But Dr. Arnold was going to treat you a better."

"Ah, yes!" replied the doctor, dismissing the latter from his patient. He was very friendly, affable, busy, kind. He would come to Sheffield the next day.

"What is your father?" he asked.

"He is a coal-miner," replied Paul.

"Not very well off, I suppose?"

"This—I am after this," said Paul.

"And you?" asked the doctor.

"I was a clerk in Jordan's Appliance Factory."

The doctor smiled at him.

"Er—to go to Sheffield?" he asked, crossing the tips of his fingers together, and winking with his eyes. "Right guv'nor?"

"Thank you!" said Paul, flushing and uneasy. "And you'll come to-morrow?"

"To-morrow—Sunday? Yes! Can you tell me about what time there is a train to the stations?"

"There is a Central gets in at four-fifteen."

"And will there be any way of getting up to the house? Shall I have to walk?" The doctor smiled.

"There is the train," said Paul, "the Western Park train."

The doctor made a note of it.

"Thank you!" he said, and shook hands.

Then Paul went on home to see his father, who was left in the charge of Minnie. Walter Morel was getting very grey now. Paul found him digging in the garden. He had written him a letter. He shook hands with his father.

"Hello, son! The bus landed, then?" said the father.

"Yes," replied the son. "But I'm going back to-night."

"Are we, begoy!" exclaimed the father. "An' how are ween comin'?"

"No."

"That's just like thee," said Morel. "Cross the water is."

The father was afraid of the mention of his wife. The two went indoors. Paul sat in silence; his father, with dusty hands, and sleeves rolled up, sat in the arm-chair opposite and looked at him.

"Well, an' how is she?" asked the mother at length, in a hoarse voice.

"She can sit up; she can be carried down for tea," said Paul.

"That's a blaind!" exclaimed Morel. "I hope we'll soon be hevin' her whoms, then. An' what's that Nottingham doctor say?"

"He's going to-morrow to have an examination of her."

"Is he begoy? That's a tidy gamey, I'm shakin'!"

"Right guv'nor."

"Right guv'nor!" The mother spoke breathlessly. "Well, we must find it from somewhere."

"I can pay that," said Paul.

There was a silence between them for some time.

"She says she hopes you're getting on all right with Minnie,"

Paul said.

"Yes, I'm all right, an' I wish as she was," answered Morel.

"But Mabel's a good little wench, bless 'er heart!" He was looking dismal.

"I'll have to be going at half-past three," said Paul.

"It's a tragedy for thee, lad! Right genuine! And where dost think she'll be able to get so fix as this?"

"We must see what the doctor says tomorrow," Paul said.

Mabel sighed deeply. The house seemed strangely empty, and Paul thought his father looked lost, broken, and old.

"You'll have to go and see her next week, father," he said.

"I hope she'll be a-though by that time," said Mabel.

"It shan't be," said Paul, "then you must come."

"I dunno where I'll find it money," said Mabel.

"And I'll write to you what the doctor says," said Paul.

"But the worse I write a fashion, I worse me's it out," said Mabel.

"Well, I'll write plain."

It was no good taking Mabel to answer, for he could scarcely do more than write his own name.

The doctor came. Leonard felt it his duty to meet him with a talk. The conversation did not take long. Anne, Arthur, Paul, and Leonard were waiting in the parlour anxiously. The doctor came down. Paul glanced at them. He had never had any hope, except when he had deceived himself.

"It may be a rumour; we must wait and see," said Dr. Jackson.

"And if it is," said Anne, "can you send it away?"

"Probably," said the doctor.

Paul put up his sovereigns and half's sovereigns on the table. The doctor counted them, took a dollar out of his purse, and put that down.

"Thank you!" he said. "I'm sorry Mrs. Mabel is so ill. But we must see what we can do."

"There can't be no operation?" said Paul.

The doctor shook his head.

"No," he said; "and even if there could, her heart wouldn't stand it."

"Is her heart dirty?" asked Paul.

"Yes; you must be careful with her."

"Very dirty?"

"No—no—no! Just take care."

And the doctor went gone.

Then Paul crawled his mother downstairs. She lay deeply, like a child. But when he was on the stairs, she put her arms round his neck, clinging.

"I'm so frightened of these beauty stains," she said.

And he was frightened, too. He would let Leonard die if another came. He felt he could not carry her.

"He thinks it's only a tumour!" cried Anne to her mother. "And he can remove it easily."

"I know he would," protested Mrs. Marvel scornfully.

She persuaded him to notice that Paul had gone out of the room. He sat in the kitchen, smoking. Then he tried to brush some gray ash off his coat. He looked again. It was one of his mother's gray hairs. It was so long! He held it up, and it drifted into the chimney. He let go. The long gray hair floated and was gone to the blackness of the chimney.

The next day he kissed her before going back to work. It was very early in the morning, and they were alone.

"You won't live, my boy?" she said.

"No, mother."

"No; it would be silly. And take care of yourself."

"Yes," he murmured. Then, after a while. "And I shall come next Saturday, and shall bring my father?"

"I suppose he wants to come," she replied. "At any rate, if he does you'll have to let him."

He kissed her again, and stroked the hair from her temples, gently, tenderly, as if she were a lover.

"Shan't you be late?" she murmured.

"I'm going," he said, very low.

Still he sat a few minutes, staring the brown and gray hair from her temples.

"And you won't be any worse, mother?"

"No, my son."

"You promise me?"

"Yes; I won't be any worse."

He kissed her, held her in his arms for a moment, and was gone. In the early sunny morning he ran to the station, crying all the way; he did not know what for. And her blue eyes were wide and staring at the thought of him.

In the afternoon he went a walk with Clara. They sat in the little wood where Blackbills were nesting. He took her hand.

"You'll see," he said to Clara, "that's never be better!"

"Oh, you don't know!" replied the other.

"I do," he said.

She caught him impulsively in her breast.

"Try and forget it, dear," she said. "Try and forget it."

"I will," he answered.

Her breast was there, warm for him, her hands were in his hair. It was comforting, and he held his arms round her. But he

did not forget. He only talked to Clara of something else. And it was always so. When she felt it coming, the agony, she cried to him:

"Don't think of it, Paul! Don't think of it, my darling!"

And she pressed him to her breast, rocked him, soothed him like a child. So he put the trouble aside for her sake, or take it up again immediately he was alone. All the time, as he went about, he cried mechanically. His mind and hands were busy. He cried, he did not know why. It was his blood weeping. It was just as much alone whether he was with Clara or with the men on the Wharfe Flows. Just himself and the promise made him, that was all that existed. He read sometimes. He had to keep his mind occupied. And Clara was a way of occupying his mind.

On the Saturday Walter Morel went to Sheffield. He was a slender figure, looking rather as if nobody owned him. Paul ran upstairs.

"My father's come," he said, kissing his mother.

"Has he?" she answered wearily.

The old collier came rather frightened into the bedroom.

"How does it feel there, lass?" he asked, going forward and kissing her in a hasty, timid fashion.

"Well, I'm satisfied," she replied.

"I see the art," he said. He stood looking down on her. Then he wiped his eyes with his handkerchief. Helpless, and as if nobody owned him, he looked.

"Have you gone on all right?" asked the wife, rather wearily, as if it were an effort to talk to him.

"Yes," he answered. "It's a bit better-headed now and again, as yet might expect."

"Does she have your dinner ready?" asked Mrs. Morel.

"Well, I'm 'ad to think as 'er once or twice," he said.

"And you must show at her if she's not ready. She will leave things to the last minute."

She gave him a few instructions. He sat looking at her as if she were almost a stranger to him, before whom he was returned and humble, and she if he had lost his presence of mind, and wanted to run. The feeling that he wanted to run away, that he was as close to be gone from so trying a situation, and yet must linger because it looked better, made his presence so trying. He put up his eyebrows for misery, and stretched his lips on his knees, feeling as awkward in presence of a big trouble.

Mrs. Morel did not change much. She stayed in Sheffield for two months. If anything, at the end she was rather worse. But she wanted to go home. Annie had her children. Mrs. Morel

wanted to go home. So they got a motor-car from Hingham—  
for she was too ill to go by train—and she was driven through the  
sunshine. It was just August; everything was bright and warm.  
Under the blue sky they could all see the sea lying. Yet she was  
paler than she had been for weeks. They all laughed and talked.

"Annie," she exclaimed, "I saw a bird dart on that rock!"

Her eyes were so quick; she was still so full of life.

Mord knew she was crying. He had the front-door open.  
Everybody was on tiptoe. Half the street turned out. They heard  
the sound of the great motor-car. Mrs. Mord, smiling, drove home  
down the street.

"And just look at those all-comers out town yet!" she said. "For  
sure, I suppose I *should* have done the same. How do you do,  
Mrs. Marchmont? How are you, Mrs. Hanson?"

They none of them could hear, but they saw her smile and nod.  
And they all saw death on her face, they said. It was a great  
event in the street.

Mord wanted to carry her indoors, but he was too old. Arthur  
took her as if she were a child. They laid out her a big, deep chair  
by the hearth where her rocking-chair used to stand. When she  
was uncapped and seated, and had drunk a little brandy, she  
looked round the room.

"Don't think I didn't like your house, Annie," she said; "but  
it's nice to be in my own home again."

And Mord answered hoarsely:

"It is, yes, it is."

And Minnie, the little quiet maid, said:

"Ain't we glad t' have you?"

There was a lovely yellow row of window-s in the garden. He  
looked out of the window.

"Those are my window-s!" she said.

*The Release*

"By the way," said Dr. Ansell one evening when Mord was in Bradford, "we've got a man in the fever hospital here who comes from Nottingham—Dewar. He doesn't seem to have many belongings in this world."

"Dewar Dewar?" Paul exclaimed.

"That's the man—has been a fine fellow, physically, I should think. Born in a bit of a queer family. You know him?"

"He used to work at the place where I am."

"Did he? Do you know anything about him? He's just nothing, or he'd be a lot better than he is by now."

"I don't know anything of his home circumstances, except that he's separated from his wife and has been a bit down, I believe. But tell him about me, will you? Tell him I'll come and see him."

The next time Mord saw the doctor he said:

"And what about Dewar?"

"I said to him," answered the other, "'Do you know a man from Nottingham named Mord?'" and he looked at me as if he'd jump at my throat. So I said, 'I see you know the name; it's Paul Mord.' Then I told him about your saying you would go and see him. 'What does he want?' he said, as if you were a policeman."

"And did he say he would see me?" asked Paul.

"He wouldn't say anything—good, bad, or indifferent," replied the doctor.

"Why not?"

"That's what I want to know. There he lies and sulks, day in, day out. Can't get a word of information out of him."

"Do you think I might go?" asked Paul.

"You might."

There was a feeling of connection between the dead man, more than ever since they had fought. In a way Mord felt guilty towards the other, and more or less responsible. And being in such a state of soul himself, he felt an almost painful nervousness to Dewar, who was suffering and despairing, too. Besides, they had met in a violent extremity of hate, and it was a bond. At any rate, the elemental man in each had met.



He went down to the isolation hospital, with Dr. Ansell's card. The nurse, a headstrong young Irishwoman, led him down the ward.

"A visitor to see you, Jim Crow," she said.

Dawson turned over suddenly with a startled grunt.

"Eh?"

"Caw!" she roared. "He can only say 'Caw!' I have brought you a gentleman to see you. Now say 'Thank you,' and show some manners."

Dawson looked swiftly with his dark, startled eyes beyond the nurse at Paul. His look was full of fear, mistrust, hate, and misery. Mord met the look, dark eyes, and answered: "The two men were afraid of the naked selves they had been."

"Dr. Ansell told me you were lost," said Mord, holding out his hand.

Dawson mechanically shook hands.

"So I thought I'd come in," continued Paul.

There was no answer. Dawson lay staring at the opposite wall.

"Say 'Caw!'" roared the nurse. "Say 'Caw!' Join Crow!"

"He is gazing on all right!" said Paul to her.

"Oh yes! He has and I suppose he's going to die," said the nurse, "and it frightens every word out of his mouth."

"And you must have somebody to talk to," laughed Mord.

"Thank it!" laughed the nurse. "Only two old men and a boy who always cries. Is it hard here? How am I dying to hear Jim Crow's voice, and nothing but an old 'Caw!' will be given!"

"So rough on you!" said Mord.

"Isn't it?" said the nurse.

"I suppose I am a gopher," he laughed.

"Oh, dropped straight from heaven!" laughed the nurse.

Presently she left the two men alone. Dawson was thinner, and handsome again, but his seemed low in him. As the doctor said, he was lying stilling, and would not move forward towards convalescence. He seemed to grudge every beat of his heart.

"Have you had a bad time?" asked Paul.

Suddenly again Dawson looked at him.

"What are you doing in Sheffield?" he asked.

"My mother was taken ill at my sister's in Thurston Street. What are you doing here?"

There was no answer.

"How long have you been in?" Mord asked.

"I couldn't say for sure," Dawson answered grudgingly.

He lay staring across at the wall opposite, as if trying to believe Mord was not there. Paul felt his heart go hard and angry.

"Dr. Ansell told me you were here," he said coldly.

The other man did not answer.

"Typical! A pretty bad, I know," Morrel promised.

Suddenly Dawson said:

"What did you come for?"

"Because Dr. Ansell said you didn't know anybody here. Do you?"

"I know nobody nowhere," said Dawson.

"Well," said Paul, "it's because you don't choose to, then."

There was another silence.

"We'll be taking my mother home as soon as we can," said Paul.

"What's a matter with her?" asked Dawson, with a sick man's interest in illness.

"She's got a cancer."

There was another silence.

"But we want to get her home," said Paul. "We'll have to get a motor-car."

Dawson lay thinking.

"Why don't you ask Thomas Jordan to lend you his?" said Dawson.

"It's not big enough," Morrel answered.

Dawson blinked his dark eyes as he lay thinking.

"Then ask Jack Pilkington; he'd lend it you. You know him."

"I think I'll hire one," said Paul.

"You're a fool if you do," said Dawson.

The sick man was gaunt and handsome again. Paul was sorry for him because his eyes looked so tired.

"Did you get a job here?" he asked.

"I was only here a day or two before I was taken bad," Dawson replied.

"You want to get in a convalescent home," said Paul.

The other's face clouded again.

"I'm gone to no convalescent home," he said.

"My father's home is the one at Southorpe, isn't he?" he asked. Dr. Ansell would get you a recommendation."

Dawson lay thinking. It was evident he dared not face the world again.

"The seaside would be all right just now," Morrel said. "Sun to those sandhills, and the waves not far out."

The other did not answer.

"By God!" Paul concluded, too miserable to bother much; "it's all right when you know you're going to walk again, and swim!"

Dawson glanced at him quickly. The man's dark eyes were afraid

to meet any other eyes in the world. But the real misery and helplessness in Paul's tone gave him a feeling of relief.

"Is this for good?" he asked.

"She's going like war," Paul answered, "but cheerful—  
heavily!"

He hit him up. After a minute he rose.

"Well, I'll be going," he said. "I'll leave you the half-crown."

"I don't want it," Diana muttered.

David did not answer, but left the coin on the table.

"Well," he said, "I'll try and come in when I'm back in Sheffield. Happen you might like to see my brother-in-law? He works at Picostraf."

"I don't know him," said Diana.

"He's all right. Should I tell him to come? He might bring you some papers to look at."

The other man did not answer. Paul went. The strong emotion that Diana aroused in him, repressed, made him shiver.

He did not tell his mother, but next day he spoke to Clara about the landlady. It was in the dinner-hour. The two did not often go out together now, but this day he asked her to go with him to the Charles grounds. There they sat while the scarlet geraniums and the yellow calceolarias blazed in the sunlight. She was now always rather nervous, and rather reserved towards him.

"Did you know Baxter was in Sheffield Hospital with typhoid?" he asked.

She looked at him with startled grey eyes, and her face went pale.

"No," she said, frightened.

"He's getting better. I went to see him yesterday—the doctor said so."

Clara seemed stricken by the news.

"Is he very bad?" she asked guiltily.

"He has been. He's mending now."

"What did he say to you?"

"Oh, nothing! He seems to be mending."

There was a distance between the two of them. He gave her more information.

She went about shut up and silent. The next time they took a walk together, she disengaged herself from his arm, and walked at a distance from him. He was winning her comfort badly.

"Won't you be nice with me?" he asked.

She did not answer.

"What's the matter?" he said, putting his arm across her shoulder.

"Don't!" she said, disengaging herself.

He left her alone, and returned to his own brooding.

"Is it flatter that agates you?" he asked at length.

"I have been able to love!" she said.

"I've said many a time you haven't treated him well," he replied.

And there was a hostility between them. Each pursued his own train of thought.

"I've treated him—no, I've treated him badly," she said.

"And now you treat me badly. It serves me right."

"How do I treat you badly?" he said.

"It serves me right," she repeated. "I never considered him worth loving, and now you don't consider me. But it serves me right. He loved me a thousand times better than you ever did."

"He didn't!" protested Paul.

"He did!" At any rate, he did respect me, and that's what you don't do."

"It looked as if he respected you!" he said.

"He did! And I made him respect—I know I did! You've taught me that. And he loved me a thousand times better than ever you do."

"All right," said Paul.

He only wanted to be left alone now. He had his own trouble, which was almost too much to bear. Clara only tormented him, and made him tired. He was not sorry when he left her.

She went on the first opportunity to Sheffield to see her husband. The meeting was not a success. But she left him calm and faint and moody. She wanted to make restitution. It was not that she loved him. As she looked at him lying there her heart did not warm with love. Only she wanted to sacrifice herself to him, to kneel before him. She wanted now to be self-sacrificial. After all, she had failed to make Edward really love her. She was morally highbrowed. She wanted to do penance. So she knelt to Diana, and it gave him a subtle pleasure. But the distance between them was still very great—too great. It frightened the man. It alarmed the woman. She liked to feel she was serving him across an insuperable distance. She was proud now.

Mood went to see Diana more or less. There was a sort of friendship between the two men, who were all the while slowly rivals. But they never mentioned the woman who was between them.

Mrs. Alford got gradually worse. At first they used to carry her downstairs, sometimes even into the garden. She sat propped in her chair, smiling, and so pretty. The gold wedding-ring shone on her white hand; her hair was carefully brushed. And she

watched the tangled hair become drying, the chrysanthemums coming out, and the daisies.

Fred and she were afraid of each other. He knew, and she knew, that she was dying. But they kept up a pretence of cheerfulness. Every morning, when he got up, he went into her room as he goes now.

"Did you sleep, my dear?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered.

"Not very well?"

"Well, yes."

Then he knew she had laid awake. He ran his hand under the bedclothes, putting the place on her side where the pain was.

"Has it been bad?" he asked.

"No. It hurt a bit, but nothing to mention."

And she smiled in her old wonted way. As she lay she looked like a girl. And all the while her blue eyes watched him. But there were the dark pain-circles beneath that made him ache again.

"It's a sunny day," he said.

"It's a beautiful day."

"Do you think you'll be carried down?"

"I shall see."

That he went away to get her breakfast. All day long he was conscious of watching her. It was a long ache that made him forgetful. Then, when he got home in the early evening, he glanced through the kitchen window. She was not there; she had not got up.

He ran straight upstairs and found her. He was almost afraid to ask:

"Didn't you get up, Fanny?"

"No," she said. "It was that morphine; it made me tired."

"I think he gives you too much," he said.

"I think he does," she answered.

He sat down by the bed, miserably. She had a way of curling and lying on her side, like a child. The gray and brown hair was loose over her ears.

"Doesn't it tickle you?" he said, gently putting it back.

"It does," she replied.

His face was near hers. Her blue eyes smiled straight into his, like a girl's—warm, laughing with tender love. It made him part with tears, agony, and love.

"You want your hair doing in a plot," he said. "Lie still."

And going behind her, he carefully loosened her hair, brushed it out. It was like fine long silk of brown and gray. Her head was cradled between her shoulders. As he lightly brushed and plaited

her hair, he bit his lip and felt dumb. It all seemed unreal, he could not understand it.

At night he often worked in her room, looking up from time to time. And so often he found her blue eyes fixed on him. And when their eyes met, she smiled. He worked away again mechanically, producing good stuff without knowing what he was doing.

Sometimes he came in, very pale and tall, with watery, swollen eyes, like a man who is drunk almost to death. They were both afraid of the visits that were happening between them.

Then she pretended to be better, clung to him guiltily, made a great fuss over some scraps of news. For they had both come to the condition when they had to make much of the trifles, lest they should give in to the big thing, and their human independence would go smash. They were afraid, so they made light of things and were gay.

Sometimes as she lay he knew she was thinking of the past. Her mouth gradually shut hard in a line. She was holding herself rigid, so that she might do without ever uttering the great cry that was tearing from her. He never forgot that hard, utterly lonely and stubborn clenching of her mouth, which persisted for weeks. Sometimes, when it was lighter, she talked about her husband. Now she hated him. She did not forgive him. She could not bear him to be in the room. And a few things, the things that had been most bitter to her, came up again so strongly that they broke from her, and she told her son.

He felt as if his life were being destroyed, piece by piece, within him. Often the tears came suddenly. He ran to the station, the tear-drops falling on the pavement. Often he could not go on with his work. The pen stopped writing. He sat staring, quite unconscious. And when he came round again he felt sick, and trembled in his hands. He never questioned what it was. He could did not try to analyse or understand. He merely submitted, and kept his eyes shut, let the thing go over him.

His mother did the same. She thought of the pain, of the struggle, of the next day's hardly ever of the death. That was coming, she knew. She had no interest in it. But she would never excuse it or make friends with it. Blind, with her face shut hard and blind, she was pushed towards the doom. The days passed, the weeks, the months.

Sometimes, in the sunny afternoons, she seemed almost happy. "I try to think of the nice times—when we went to Mablethorpe, and Robin Hood's Bay, and Skunklee," she said. "After all, not everybody has seen these beautiful places. And wasn't it beautiful? I try to think of that, not of the other things."

Then, again, for a whole evening they spoke not a word, neither did he. They were together, rigid, motionless, alone. He went into his room at last to go to bed, and leaned against the doorway as if paralyzed, unable to go any further. His consciousness went. A furious storm, he knew not what, seemed to rage inside him. He stood leaning there, subsiding, never questioning.

In the morning they were both stirred again, though her face was grey with the anguish, and her body felt like ash. But they were bright again, nevertheless. Often, especially if Annie or Arthur were at home, he neglected her. He did not see much of Clara. Usually he was with men. He was quick and active and lively; but when his friends saw him go white to the gills, his dark eyes glowering, they had a certain sinister notion. Sometimes he went to Clara, but she was almost cold to him.

"Take me!" he said simply.

Occasionally she would. But she was afraid. When he had her thus, there was something in it that made her shrink away from him—something abnormal. She grew so dread him. He was so quiet, yet so strange. She was afraid of the man who was not there with her, whom she could feel behind the man-to-beat lover, somebody unknown, that filled her with horror. She began to have a kind of horror of him. It was almost as if he were a criminal. He wanted her—he had her—and it made her feel as if death itself had her in its grip. She lay in terror. There was no man there loving her. She almost hated him. There came little hours of tenderness. But she dared not pity him.

Dennis had come to Colonel Sedy's home near Birmingham. There Paul shared him sometimes, Clara very occasionally. Between the two men the friendship had developed peculiarly. Dennis, who moved very slowly and seemed very feeble, seemed to leave himself in the hands of Paul.

In the beginning of November Clara reminded Paul that it was her birthday.

"I'd nearly forgotten," he said.

"I thought quiet," she replied.

"Ho. Shall we go to the woods for the week-end?"

They went. It was cold and rather dismal. She wanted for him to be warm and tender with her, instead of which he seemed hardly aware of her. He sat in the railway-carriage, looking out, and was startled when she spoke to him. He was not definitely thinking. Things seemed as if they did not exist. She went across to him.

"What is it, dear?" she asked.

"Nothing!" he said. "Don't those window-panes look monstrous?"

He sat holding her hand. He could not talk now. It was a comfort, however, to sit holding her hand. She was distressed and miserable. He was not with her; she was nothing.

And in the evening they sat among the sandhills, looking at the black, heavy sea.

"She will never give us," he said quietly.

Clara's heart sank.

"No," she replied.

"There are different ways of dying. My father's people are frightened, and have to be pushed out of life now. Death has come now a daughter-in-law, pulled by the neck, but my mother's people are pushed from behind, inch by inch. They are robbers' people, and won't die."

"Yes," said Clara.

"And she won't die. She can't. Mr. Renshaw, the parson, was in the other day. 'Thank' he said to her, 'you will have your mother and father, and your sister, and your son, in the Other Land.' And she said, 'I have done without them for a long time, and am do without them now. It is the living I want, not the dead.' She wants to live even now."

"Oh, how terrible!" said Clara, too frightened to speak.

"And she looks at me, and she wants to stay with me," he went on mechanically. "She's got such a will, it seems as if she would never go—never!"

"Don't think of it!" cried Clara.

"And she was religious—she is religious now—but it is no good. She simply won't give in. And do you know, I said to her on Thursday, 'Mother, if I had to die, I'd die. I'd said to die.' And she said to me, sharp: 'Do you think I haven't? Do you think you can die when you like?'"

His voice ceased. He did not cry, only went on speaking monotonously. Clara wanted to run. She looked round. There was the black, no-releasing shadow, the dark sky down on her. She got up trembled. She wanted to be where there was light, where there were other people. She wanted to be away from him. He sat with his head dropped, not moving a muscle.

"And I don't want her to see," he said, "and she knows it. When I ask her, 'Shall you have anything?' she's almost afraid to say 'Yes.' 'I'll have a cup of finger's,' she says. 'It'll only keep your strength up,' I said to her. 'Yes'—and she almost cried—'but there's such a gathering when I sat nothing, I can't hear it.' So I went and made her the food. It's the cancer that gnaws like that at her. I wish she'd die!"

"Come!" said Clara roughly. "I'm going."



He followed her down the darkness of the stairs. He did not come to her. He seemed scarcely aware of her existence. And she was afraid of him, and disliked him.

In the same acute class they were back to Birmingham. He was always busy, always doing something, always going from one to the other of his friends.

On the Monday he went to see Frances Dawson. Lizzie and Paul, the girls, rose to greet the other, slipping to his chair as he held out his hand.

"You shouldn't get up," said Paul.

Dawson sat down heavily, staring Mordel with a sort of suspicion.

"Don't you wear your feet on me," he said, "if you've any sense to do."

"I wanted to come," said Paul. "How? I thought you were away."

The invalid put them aside.

"It's not been much of a weekend," said Mordel.

"How's your mother?" asked the other.

"Hardly any different."

"I thought she was perhaps worse, being as you didn't come on Sunday."

"I was at Skipton," said Paul. "I wanted a change."

The other looked at him with dark eyes. He seemed to be waiting, not quite daring to ask, craving to be told.

"I went with Clara," said Paul.

"I know as much," said Dawson quietly.

"It was an old process," said Paul.

"You have it your own way," said Dawson.

That was the first time Clara had been definitely mentioned between them.

"Nay," said Mordel slowly; "she's tired of me."

Again Dawson looked at him.

"Since August she's been getting tired of me," Mordel repeated.

The two men were very quiet together. Paul suggested a game of draughts. They played in silence.

"I'll go abroad when my mother's dead," said Paul.

"Abroad?" repeated Dawson.

"Yes; I don't care what I do."

They continued the game. Dawson was winning.

"I'll have to begin a new game of some sort," said Paul; "and you as well, I suppose."

He took one of Dawson's pawns.

"I don't know," said the other.

"Things have to happen," Moral said. "It's no good doing anything—at least—no, I don't know. Give me some coffee."

The two men ate sweets, and began another game of draughts.

"What made that scar on your mouth?" asked Dorcas.

Paul got his hand hastily to his lips, and looked over the garden.

"I had a bicycle accident," he said.

Dorcas' hand trembled as he moved the pawns.

"You shouldn't let her laugh at me," he said very low.

"What?"

"That night on Woodborough Road, when you and her passed me—you with your hand on her shoulder."

"I never laughed at you," said Paul.

Dorcas kept his fingers on the draughts-pawns.

"I never knew you were there till the very second when you passed," said Moral.

"It was that as did me," he said, very low.

Paul took another sweet.

"I never laughed," he said, "except as I'm always laughing." They finished the game.

That night Moral walked home from Nottingham, in order to have something to do. The lanterns flared in a red blotch over Bulwell; the black clouds were like a low ceiling. As he went along the ten miles of highway, he felt as if he were walking out of life, between the black levels of the sky and the earth. But at the end was only the work-room. If he walked and walked far over, there was only that place to come to.

He was not tired when he got home, or he did not know it. Across the field he could see the red firelight leaping in his back-room window.

"When she's dead," he said to himself, "that fire will go out."

He took off his boots quietly and wrung up some. His mother's door was wide open, because she slept alone still. The red firelight dashed its glow on the landing. Still as a shadow, he peeped in her doorway.

"Paul?" she murmured.

His heart seemed to break again. He went in and sat by the bed.

"How late you are!" she murmured.

"Not very," he said.

"Why, what time is it?" The murmur came plaintive and helpful.

"It's only just gone eleven."

That was not true; it was nearly one o'clock.

"Oh!" she said; "I thought it was later."

And he knew the unutterable misery of her sight that would not go.

"Can't you sleep, my patron?" he said.

"No, I can't," she wept.

"Never mind, Little," he said crooning. "Never mind, my love. I'll stop with you half an hour, my patron, then perhaps it will be better."

And he sat by the bedside, slowly, rhythmically stroking her brow with his finger-tips, stroking her eyes shut, stroking her, holding her fingers in his free hand. They could hear the despairing breathing in the other room.

"Now go to bed," the murmured, lying quiet still under his fingers and his love.

"Will you sleep?" he asked.

"Yes, I think so."

"You feel better, my Little, don't you?"

"Yes," she said, like a fretful, half-washed child.

Still the days and the weeks went by. He hardly ever went to see Clara now. But he wandered restlessly from room to room to another for some help, and there was none anywhere. Miriam had written to him tenderly. He went to see her. Her heart was very sore when she saw him, white, gaunt, with his eyes dark and bewildered. Her pity came up, hurting her till she could not bear it.

"How is that?" she asked.

"The same—the same!" he said. "The doctor says she can't last, but I know she will. She'll be here at Christmas."

Miriam shuddered. She drew him to her; she pressed him to her bosom; she kissed him and kissed him. He subsided, but it was torture. She could not let him sit agony. That remained alone and apart. She kissed his face, and raised his head, while his soul was spent writhing with the agony of death. And she kissed him and fingered his body, till at last, feeling he would go mad, he got away from her. It was not that he wanted just death—and dose. And she thought she had soothed him and done him good.

December came, and some more. He stayed at home all the while now. They could not afford a nurse. Annie came to look after her mother; the parish came, whom they knew, came in morning and evening. Paul shared the nursing with Annie. Often, in the evenings, when friends were in the kitchen with them, they all laughed together and shook with laughter. It was reaction. Paul was so content, Annie was so quiet. The whole party laughed till they cried, trying to subdue the sound. And Mrs. Mowat, lying alone in the darkness heard them, and among her bitterness was a feeling of relief.

Paul went up with the hot milk in a feeding-cup. It was now o'clock.

She was curled up in bed, and he put the feeding-cup between her lips that he would have died to save from any harm. She took a sip, then put the spout of the cup away and looked at him with her dark, wondering eyes. He looked at her.

"Oh, it is bitter, Paul!" she said, making a little grimace.

"It's a new sleeping draught the doctor gave me for you," he said. "He thought it wouldn't leave you in such a state in the morning."

"And I hope it won't," she said, like a child.

She drank some more of the milk.

"But it is horrid!" she said.

He saw her faint fingers over the cup, her lips making a little move.

"I know—I tasted it," he said. "But I'll give you some clean milk afterwards."

"I think so," she said, and she went on with the draught. She was obedient to him like a child. He wondered if she knew. He saw her poor wasted throat moving as she drank with difficulty. Then he sat down again for more milk. There were no grains in the bottom of the cup.

"Was she bad?" whispered Annie.

"Yes—and she said it was bitter."

"Oh!" laughed Annie, putting her under lip between her teeth.

"And I told her it was a new draught. Where's that milk?"

They both went upstairs.

"I wonder why nurse didn't come to settle me down?" complained the mother, like a child, wistfully.

"She said she was going to a concert, my love," replied Annie.

"Did she?"

They were alone a minute. Mrs. Morel gulped the little clean milk.

"Annie, this draught was horrid!" she said pitifully.

"Was it, my love? Well, never mind."

The mother sighed again with weariness. Her pulse was very irregular.

"Let it settle you down," said Annie. "Perhaps nurse will be up later."

"Ay," said the mother—"ay."

They turned the clothes back. Paul saw his mother like a girl curled up in her flannel nightgown. Quickly they made one half the bed, moved her, made the other, straightened her nightgown over her small feet, and covered her up.

"There," said Paul, stroking her softly. "There!—now you'll sleep."

"Yes," she said. "I didn't think you could do the bed so nicely," she added, almost gaily. Then she curled up, with her cheek on her hand, her head snuggled between her shoulder. Paul put the long thin plot of grey hair over her shoulder and kissed her.

"You'll sleep, my love," he said.

"Yes," she answered tranquilly. "Good-night."

They put out the light, and it was still.

Morn was in bed. Morn did not come. Anne and Paul came to look at her at about eleven. She seemed to be sleeping as usual after her struggles. Her mouth had come a bit open.

"Should we not up?" said Paul.

"I'll lie with her as I always do," said Anne. "She might wake up."

"All right. And call me if you see any difference."

"Yes."

They lingered before the bedroom fire, feeling the night big and black and empty outside, their two selves alone in the world. At last he went into the next room and went to bed.

He slept almost untroubledly, but kept waking every now and again. Then he went sound asleep. He started awake at Anne's whispered, "Paul, Paul." He rose like a cat in her white night-dress, with her long plot of hair down her back, standing in the darkness.

"Yes?" he whispered, sitting up.

"Come and look at her."

He slipped out of bed. A lead of gas was burning in the sofa chamber. His mother lay with her cheek on her hand, curled up as she had gone to sleep. But her mouth had fallen open, and she breathed with great, hoarse breaths, like snoring, and there were long intervals between.

"She's going!" he whispered.

"Yes," said Anne.

"How long has she been like it?"

"I only just woke up."

Annie huddled into the dressing-gown, Paul wrapped himself in a brown blanket. It was three o'clock. He needed the fire. Then the two sat waiting. The great, snoring breath was taken—held awhile—then given back. There was a space—a long space. Then they started. The great, snoring breath was taken again. He bent close down and looked at her.

"Isn't it awful?" whispered Annie.

He nodded. They sat down again helplessly. Again came the great, waiting breath. Again they hung suspended. Again it was gone back, long and hoarse. The sound, so irregular, at wide wide intervals, sounded through the house. Morel, in his room, slept on. Paul and Annie sat crouched, huddled, motionless. The great, waiting sound began again—there was a painful pause while the breath was held—back came the rasping breath. Minutes after minutes passed. Paul looked at her again, looking her over her.

"She may live like this," he said.

They were both silent. He looked out of the window, and could faintly discern the snow on the garden.

"You may go to my bed," he said to Annie. "I'll sit up."

"No," she said, "I'll stop with you."

"I'd rather you didn't," he said.

At last Annie crept out of the room, and he was alone. He hugged himself in his brown blanket, crouched in front of his mother, watching. She looked dreadful, with the brown fire lines back. He watched. Sometimes he thought the great breath would never begin again. He could not bear it—the waiting. Then suddenly, startling him, came the great harsh sound. He started the fire again, absently. She must not be disturbed. The minutes went by. The night was going, breath by breath. Each time the sound came he felt it wrong him, till at last he could not feel so much.

His father got up. Paul heard the miner drawing his stockings on, yawning. Then Morel, in shirt and stockings, entered.

"Hush!" said Paul.

Morel stood watching. Then he looked at his son, helplessly, and in horror.

"Had I better stop a-while?" he whispered.

"No. Go to work. She'll last through to-morrow."

"I don't think so."

"Yes. Go to work."

The miner looked at her again, in fear, and went obediently out of the room. Paul saw the cape of his father's swinging against his legs.

After another half-hour Paul went downstairs and drank a cup of tea, then returned. Morel, dressed for the pit, stood upstairs again.

"Am I to go?" he said.

"Yes."

And in a few minutes Paul heard his father's heavy footsteps go cludding over the descending snow. Miners called in the street as they tramped in gangs to work. The middle long-drawn

breath continued—heave—heave—heave; then a long pause—then ah—ah-b-b-b-b! as it came back. Far away over the snow sounded the hooters of the snowbirds. One after another they creased and boomed, some small and far away, some near, the pleasure of the collision and the other words. Then there was silence. He stretched his fire. The great breaths broke the silence—she looked past the mirror. He put back the blind and peered out. Still it was dark. Perhaps there was a lighter tinge. Perhaps the snow was bluer. He drew up the blind and got dressed. Then, gladdening, he drank heavily from the bottle on the washstand. The snow was growing blue. He heard a cart clanking down the street. Yes, it was seven o'clock, and it was coming a little brighter. He heard some people calling. The world was waking. A grey, dully downy crept over the snow. Yes, he could see the houses. He put out the gas. It seemed very dark. The breathing came still, but he was almost used to it. He could see her. She was just the same. He wondered if he piled heavy clothes on top of her it would make it heavier and the horrible breathing would stop. He looked at her. That was not her—not her a bit. If he piled the blankets and heavy cover on her—

Suddenly the door opened, and Anna entered. She looked at him questioningly.

"Just the same," he said calmly.

They whispered together a minute, then went downstairs to get breakfast. It was twenty to eight. Soon Anna came down.

"Isn't it awful! Doesn't she look awful!" she whispered, dazed with horror.

He nodded.

"If she looks like that!" said Anna.

"Drink some tea," he said.

They went upstairs again. Soon the neighbour came with their frightened question:

"How is she?"

It went on just the same. She lay with her cheek in her hand, her mouth falls open, and the great, ghastly noise came and went.

At ten o'clock nurse came. She looked strange and well-begotten.

"Nurse," said Paul, "she'll last like this for days?"

"She can't, Mr. Morel," said nurse. "She can't."

There was a silence.

"Isn't it dreadful!" wailed the nurse. "Who would have thought she could stand it? Go down now, Mr. Morel, go down."

At last, at about eleven o'clock, he went downstairs and sat in the neighbour's house. Anna was downstairs still. Morel and

Arthur were upstairs. Paul sat with his head in his hands. Gradually Anne came flying across the yard crying, half mad:

"Paul—Paul—she's gone!"

In a second he was back in his own house and upstairs. The lay curled up and still, with her face on her hand, and never was wiping her mouth. They all stood back. He looked down, and put his face to hers and his arms round her.

"My love—my love—oh, my love!" he whispered again and again. "My love—oh, my love!"

Then he leapt the same behind her, crying, saying:

"She's better, Mr. Morel, she's better!"

When he took his face up from her warm, dead mother he went straight downstairs and began blocking his nose.

There was a good deal to do, lessons to write, and so on. The doctor came and glanced at her, and sighed.

"Ay—poor thing!" he said, then turned away. "Well, call at the surgery about six for the certificate."

The father came home from work at about four o'clock. He dropped silently into the house and sat down. Minnie bustled to give him his dinner. Tired, he laid his head down on the table. There were ready scraps for the dancery, which he liked. Paul wondered if he knew. It was some time, and nobody had spoken. At last the son said:

"You noticed the blinds were down?"

Minnie looked up.

"No," he said. "Why—has she gone?"

"Yes."

"When was that?"

"About twelve this morning."

"How?"

The sister sat still for a moment, then began his dinner. It was as if nothing had happened. He ate his scraps in silence. Afterwards he washed and went upstairs to dress. The door of her room was shut.

"Have you seen her?" Anne asked of him when he came down.

"No," he said.

In a little while he went out. Anne went away, and Paul called on the undertaker, the druggist, the doctor, the registrar. It was a long business. He got back at nearly eight o'clock. The undertaker was coming soon to measure for the coffin. The house was empty except the lay. He took a candle and went upstairs.

The room was cold, that had been warm for so long. Flowers, books, pictures, all sick-room litter was taken away; everything was hush and serious. The lay curled on the bed, the ruddy of the



steet from the raised foot was like a clean curve of snow, so silent. She lay like a marble asleep. With his cradle in his hand, he bent over her. She lay like a girl asleep and dreaming of her love. The mouth was a little open, as if wondering from the reflecting, but her face was young, her brow clear and white as if life had never touched it. He looked again at the forehead, at the small, writhen nose a bit on one side. She was young again. Only the hair as it curled so beautifully from her temples was mixed with silver, and the two simple plaits that lay on her shoulders were stripes of silver and brown. She would wake up. She would lift her eyelids. She was with him still. His hand and kneeed her passionately. But there was coldness against his mouth. He let his lip with honor. Looking at her, he felt he could never, never let her go. No! He rubbed the hair from her temples. That, too, was cold. He saw the mouth so dumb and wondering at the heart. Then he crunched on the floor, whispering to her.

"Minkie, minkie!"

He was still with her when the undertakers came, young men who had been to school with him. They touched her reverently, and in a quiet, businesslike fashion. They did not look at him. He watched jealously. He and Annie guarded her closely. They would not let anybody come to see her, and the neighbors were offended.

After a while Paul went out of the house, and played cards at a friend's. It was midnight when he got back. His father rose from the couch as he entered, saying in a plaintive way:

"I thought the war silver curtain, had."

"I didn't think you'd sleep," said Paul.

His father looked so solemn. Mord had been a man without fear—simply nothing frightened him. Paul realized with a start that he had been afraid to go to bed, alone in the house with his dead. He was sorry.

"I forget you'd be alone, father," he said.

"Don't want even to eat?" asked Mord.

"No."

"Silver—I made thee a drop o' hot milk. Get it down there; it's cold enough for even."

Paul drank it.

"I must go to Nottingham to-morrow," he said.

After a while Mord went to bed. He hurried past the closed door, and left his own door open. Soon the son came upstairs also. He went in to his two good nights, as usual. It was cold and dark. He wished they had kept her fire burning. Still she dreamed her young dream. But she would be cold.

"My dear!" he whispered. "My dear!"

And he did not kiss her, for fear she should be cold and strange to him. He used him that night so beautifully. He drew her close softly, not to wake her, and went to bed.

In the morning Maud summoned his courage, leaving Annie downstairs and Paul coughing in the room across the landing. He opened her door, and went into the darkened room. He saw the white upturned form in the twilight, but her he dared not see. Doubtful, not frightened to possess any of his freedom, he got out of the room again and left her. He never looked at her again, he had not seen her for months, because he had not dared to look. And she looked like his young wife again.

"Have you seen her?" Annie asked of him sharply after breakfast.

"Yes," he said.

"And don't you think she looks nice?"

"Yes."

He went out of the house soon after. And all the time he seemed to be creeping aside to avoid it.

Paul went about from place to place, doing the business of the death. He met Clara in Nottingham, and they had tea together at a café, when they were quite jolly again. She was infinitely relieved to find he did not take it tragically.

Later, when the relatives began to come for the funeral, the affair became public, and the children became social beings. They put themselves aside. They buried her in a farious storm of rain and wind. The wet clay gleamed, all the white flowers were soaked. Anne gripped his arm and leaned forward. Down below she saw a dark corner of William's coffin. The oak box sank readily. She was gone. The rain poured in the grave. The proscenium of black, with its ambrosia gleaming, turned away. The cemetery was deserted under the drenching cold rain.

Paul went home and busied himself supplying the gaps with drinks. His father sat in the kitchen with him. Mine's relations, "superior" people, and went, and said what a good man she'd been, and how he'd tried to do everything he could for her—everything. He had driven all his life to do what he could for her, and told nothing to reproach himself with. She was gone, but he'd done his best for her. He wiped his eyes with his white handkerchief. He'd nothing to reproach himself for, he repeated. All his life he'd done his best for her.

And that was how he tried to cherish her. He never thought of her personally. Everything deep in him he denied. Paul hated his father for making sentimentalism over her. He knew he would

as it is in the public-house. For the real tragedy went on in silence in spite of himself. Sometimes, later, he came down from his afternoon sleep, white and covering.

"I have been dreaming of thy mother," he said in a small voice.

"Have you father? When I dream of her it's always just as she was when she was well. I dream of her often, but it seems quite nice and natural, as if nothing had altered."

But Morel crunched on bones of the fire in terror.

The weeks passed half real, not much pain, not much of anything, perhaps a little cold, mostly a sad silence. Paul went restlessly from place to place. For some months, since his mother had been worse, he had not made love to Clara. She was, as it were, dumb to him, rather distant. Dawes saw her very occasionally, but the two could not get on much across the great distance between them. The drive of them were drifting forward.

Dawes minded very slowly. He was in the construction house at Burgess at Christmas, nearly well again. Paul went to the seaside for a few days. His father was with Anne in Sheffield. Dawes came to Paul's lodgings. He took in the house was up. The two men, between whom was such a big reserve, seemed friendly to each other. Dawes depended on Morel now. He knew Paul and Clara had practically separated.

Two days after Christmas Paul was to go back to Nottingham. The evening before he sat with Dawes smoking before the fire.

"You know Clara's coming down for the day to-morrow?" he said.

The other man glanced at him.

"Yes, you told me," he replied.

Paul drank the remainder of his glass of whisky.

"I told the landlady your wife was coming," he said.

"Did you?" said Dawes, drinking, but almost leaving himself in the other's hands. He got up rather stiffly, and reached for Morel's glass.

"Let me fill you up," he said.

Paul jumped up.

"You sit still," he said.

But Dawes, with rather shaky hand, continued to mix the drink.

"Say when," he said.

"Thank!" replied the other. "But you've no business to get up."

"It does me good, but," replied Dawes. "I begin to think I'm right again, then."

"You are about right, you know."

"I am, certainly I am," said Dawes, nodding to him.

" And Lew says he can get you on in Sheffield."

Dawson glanced at him again, with dark eyes that agreed with everything the other would say, perhaps a little dominated by him.

" It's fancy," said Paul, " starting again. I feel in a lot bigger mood than you."

" In what way, lad? "

" I don't know. I don't know, it's as if I was in a tangled sort of hole, rather dark and dreary, and no road anywhere."

" I know—I understand it," Dawson, said, nothing. " But you'll find it'll come all right."

He spoke encouragingly.

" I suppose so," said Paul.

Dawson knocked his pipe in a hopeless fashion.

" You've not done for yourself like I have," he said.

Moved now the wrist and the white hand of the other man gripping the stem of the pipe and knocking out the ash, as if he had given up.

" How old are you? " Paul asked.

" Thirty-one," replied Dawson, glancing at him.

Those brown eyes, full of the consciousness of failure, almost pleading for reassurance, for someone to re-establish the man in himself, to warm him, to set him up firm again, troubled Paul.

" You'll just be in your prime," said Moral. " You don't look as if much life had gone out of you."

The brown eyes of the other flashed suddenly.

" It hasn't," he said. " The go is there."

Paul looked up and laughed.

" We've both got plenty of life in us yet to make things fly," he said.

The eyes of the two men met. They exchanged one look. Having recognised the stress of passion such is the other, they both drank their whisky.

" Yes, indeed! " said Dawson, breathless.

There was a pause.

" And I don't see," said Paul, " why you shouldn't go on where you left off."

" What—?" said Dawson, suggestively.

" You—fit your old home together again."

Dawson hid his face and shook his head.

" Couldn't be done," he said, and he looked up with an ironic smile.

" Why? Because you don't want? "

" Perhaps."

They looked in silence. Dawes showed his teeth as he bit his lip again.

"You mean you don't want her?" asked Paul.

Dawes stood up at the picture with a comic expression on his face.

"I hardly know," he said.

The smile faded solidly up.

"I believe she wants you," said Paul.

"Do you?" replied the other, soft, indifical, abstract.

"Yes. She never really looked on to me—you were always there in the background. That's why she wouldn't get a divorce."

Dawes continued to stare at a social fashion in the picture over the mantelpiece.

"That's how women are with me," said Paul. "They want me like mad, but they don't want to belong to me. And she belongs to you all the time. I know."

The triumphant smile came up in Dawes. He showed his teeth once distinctly.

"Perhaps I was a fool," he said.

"You were a big fool," said Morel.

"But perhaps even then you were a bigger fool," said Dawes. There was a touch of triumph and wisdom in it.

"Do you think so?" said Paul.

They were silent for some time.

"At any rate, I'm clearing out to-morrow," said Morel.

"I see," answered Dawes.

Then they did not talk any more. The instinct to murder each other had returned. They almost avoided each other.

They shared the same bedroom. When they retired Dawes seemed abstract, thinking of something. He sat on the side of the bed in his shirt, looking at his legs.

"Aren't you getting cold?" asked Morel.

"I was looking at those legs," replied the other.

"What's up with 'em? They look all right," replied Paul, from his bed.

"They look all right. But there's some water in 'em yet."

"And what about it?"

"Come and look."

Paul reluctantly got out of bed and went to look at the rather handsome legs of the other man that were covered with glistening, dark gold hair.

"Look here," said Dawes, pointing to his skin. "Look at the water under here."

"Where?" said Paul.

The man pressed in his finger-tips. They felt little drums that filled up slowly.

"It's nothing," said Paul.

"You feel," said Dawson.

Paul tried with his fingers. It made little drums.

"H'm!" he said.

"Rotten, isn't it?" said Dawson.

"Why? It's nothing much."

"You're not much of a man with water in your legs."

"I can't see as it makes any difference," said Morel. "I've got a weak chest."

He returned to his own bed.

"I suppose the rest of me's all right," said Dawson, and he put out the light.

In the morning it was raining. Morel packed his bag. The sea was grey and choppy and dismal. He seemed to be curling himself off long legs more and more. It gave him a wicked pleasure to do it.

The two men were at the station. Clara stopped out of the train, and came along the platform, very erect and coldly composed. She wore a long coat and a bowed hat. Both men hated her for her composure. Paul shook hands with her as she hurried. Dawson was leaning against the bookcase, watching. His black eyebrows were buttoned up to the chin because of the rain. He was pale, with almost a touch of nobility in his features. He came forward, limping slightly.

"You ought to look better than this," she said.

"Oh, I'm all right now."

The three stood in a line. She kept the two men haunting near her.

"Shall we go to the lodging straight off," said Paul, "or somewhere else?"

"We may as well go home," said Dawson.

Paul walked on the outside of the pavement, then Dawson, then Clara. They made polite conversation. The sitting-room faced the sea, whose tide, grey and choppy, lashed now for off.

Morel swung up the big iron-chair.

"Sit down, Jack," he said.

"I don't want that chair," said Dawson.

"Sit down!" Morel repeated.

Clara took off her things and laid them on the couch. She had a slight air of resentment. Lifting her hair with her fingers, she sat down, rather stiff and composed. Paul ran downstairs to speak to the landlady.

"I should think you're cold," said Dawson to his wife. "Come nearer to the fire."

"Thank you, I'm quite warm," she answered.

She looked out of the window at the rain and at the sea.

"When are you going back?" she asked.

"Well, the women are taking until to-morrow, so he wants me to stop. He's going back to-night."

"And then you're thinking of going to Sheffield?"

"Yes."

"Are you fit to start work?"

"I'm going to start."

"You've really got a place?"

"Yes, begins on Monday."

"You don't look fit."

"Why don't I?"

She looked again out of the window instead of answering.

"And have you got lodgings in Sheffield?"

"Yes."

Again she looked away out of the window. The pains were blurred with streaming rain.

"And can you manage all right?" she asked.

"I'd think so. I'll have to!"

They were silent when Morris returned.

"I shall go by the four-twenty," he said as he entered.

Nobody answered.

"I wish you'd take your boots off," he said to Clara. "There's a pair of slippers of mine."

"Thank you," she said. "They aren't wet."

He put the slippers near her feet. She felt them there.

Morris sat down. Both the men seemed helpless, and each of them had a rather haunted look. But Dewar now curled himself quietly, seemed to yield himself, while Paul seemed to screw himself up. Clara thought she had never seen him look so small and mean. He was as if trying to get himself into the smallest possible compass. And as he went about arranging, and as he set to work, there seemed something false about him and out of tune. Watching him unknown, she said to herself there was no reality about him. He was done in his way, possession, and able to give her drinks of pure life when he was in one mood. And now he looked paltry and insignificant. There was nothing stable about him. Her husband had more manly dignity. At any rate he did not walk about with any wind. There was something constant about Morris, she thought, something stalling and false. He would never make sure ground for any woman to stand on. She despised him rather for his shrinking together, getting smaller. Her husband at least was manly, and when he was beaten gave in. But

this other would never come to being better. He would shift round and round, growl, get smaller. She despised him. And yet she watched him rather than Dawson, and it seemed as if their three lives lay in his hands. She hated him for it.

She seemed to understand better now about men, and what they could or would do. She was less afraid of them, more sure of herself. That they were not the small spirits she had imagined them made her more comfortable. She had learned a good deal—almost as much as she wanted to learn. Her cup had been full. It was well so full as she could carry. On the whole, she would not be sorry when he was gone.

They had dinner, and sat eating and drinking by the fire. Not a serious word had been spoken. Yet Clara realised that Moor was withdrawing from the world, leaving her the option to stay with her husband. It imposed her. He was a man fellow, after all, to take what he wanted and then give her back. She did not remember that she herself had had what she wanted, and really, at the bottom of her heart, wished to be given back.

Paul felt cramped up and lonely. His mother had really supported his life. He had loved her; they now had, in fact, faced the world together. Now she was gone, and the void behind him was the gap in life, the tear in the veil, through which his life seemed to drift slowly, as if he were drawn towards death. He wanted someone of their own free initiative to help him. The lesser things he began to let go from him, for fear of this big thing, the lapse towards death, following in the wake of his beloved. Clara could not stand for him to hold on to. She wanted him, but not to understand him. He felt she wanted the man on top, not the real him that was in trouble. That would be too much trouble to her; he dared not give it her. She could not cope with him. It made him ashamed, so, secretly ashamed because he was in such a mess, because his own hold on life was so unsure, because nobody held him, feeling unbalanced, adrift, as if he did not count for much in this concrete world, he drew himself together tighter and tighter. He did not want to die; he would not give in. But he was not afraid of death. If nobody would help, he would go on alone.

Dawson had been defenceless to the uncertainty of life, until he was afraid. He could go to the brink of death, he could be on the edge and look at. Then, cowed, afraid, he had to crawl back, and like a bigger take what offered. There was a certain nobility in it. As Clara saw, he cowed himself beaten, and he wanted to be taken back whether or not. That she could do for him.

It was three o'clock.



"I am going by the fourteenth," said Paul again to Clara.  
 "Are you meaning them or later?"

"I don't know," she said.

"I'm visiting my father in Nottingham at seven-fifteen," he said.

"Then," she answered, "I'll come later."

Dawson jerked suddenly, as if he had been held on a strain. He looked out over the sea, but he saw nothing.

"There were one or two boats in the cove," said Edward.  
 "I've done with 'em."

At about four o'clock he went.

"I shall see you both later," he said, as he shook hands.

"I suppose so," said Dawson. "An' perhaps—one day—I'll be able to pay you back the money as—"

"I shall come for it, you'll see," laughed Paul. "I'll be on the rocks before I'm very much older."

"Ay—well——" said Dawson.

"Good-bye," he said to Clara.

"Good-bye," she said, giving him her hand. Then she glanced at him for the last time, dumb and humble.

He was gone. Dawson and his wife sat down again.

"It's a nasty day for travelling," said the man.

"Yes," she answered.

They sat in a draughty kitchen until it grew dark. The landlady brought in the tea. Dawson drew up his chair to the table without being invited, like a husband. Then he sat humbly waiting for his cup. She served him as she would, like a wife, not consulting his wish.

After tea, as it drew near to six o'clock, he went to the window. All was dark outside. The sea was roaring.

"It's raining yet," he said.

"Is it?" she answered.

"You won't go to-night, shall you?" he said, hesitating.

She did not answer. He waited.

"I shouldn't go in that rain," he said.

"Do you want me to stay?" she asked.

He found as he held the dark curtain tumbled.

"Yes," he said.

He remained with his back to her. She rose and went slowly to him. He let go the curtain, turned, hesitating, towards her. She stood with her hands behind her back, looking up at him in a heavy, inevitable fashion.

"Do you want me, Baxter?" she asked.

His voice was hoarse as he answered.

"Do you want to come back to me?"

She made a moaning noise, lifted her arms, and put them round his neck, drawing him to her. He laid his face on her shoulder, holding her clasped.

"Take me back!" she whispered, frantic. "Take me back, take me back!" And she put her fingers through his hair, this dark hair, as if she were only semi-conscious. He tightened his grasp on her.

"Do you want me again?" he murmured, broken.

*Devil*

CLARA went with her husband to Sheffield, and Paul scarcely knew her again. Walter Morel seemed to have let all the trouble go over him, and there he was, crawling about on the quad of it, just the same. There was scarcely any bond between father and son, save that each felt he must not let the other go in any actual way. As there was no one to keep on the home, and as they could neither of them bear the emptiness of the house, Paul took lodging in Nottingham, and Morel went to live with a friendly family in Broomfield.

Everything seemed to have gone smooth for the young man. He could not prove. The picture he finished on the day of his mother's death—one that entailed hap—was the last thing he did. At work there was no Clara. When he came home he could not take up his brushes again. There was nothing left.

So he was always in the town at one place or another, drinking, loafing about with the men he knew. It really worried him. He talked to barmaids, to almost any woman, but there was that dark, stilled look in his eyes, as if he were hiding something.

Everything seemed so different, so unreal. There seemed no reason why people should go along the street, and houses pile up in the daylight. There seemed no reason why dead things should occupy the space, instead of leaving it empty. His friends talked to him; he heard the sounds, and he answered. But why there should be the noise of speech he could not understand.

He was most himself when he was alone, or working hard and mechanically at the factory. In the latter case there was pure Scepticism, when he lapsed from consciousness. But a bad omen to an end. It hurt him so, that things had lost their reality. The first snowdrops came. He saw the tiny drop-pools among the grey. They would have given him the liveliest emotion at one time. Now they were there, but they did not seem to mean anything. In a few moments they would cease to occupy that place, and just the space would be, where they had been. Tall, brilliant train-cars ran along the street at night. It seemed almost a wonder they should trouble to rattle backwards and forwards. "Why

would to go sliding down to Trest Bridge?" he asked of the big man. It seemed they just as well might not be so he.

The real thing was the thick darkness at night. That seemed to him whole and comfortable and useful. He could leave himself to it. Suddenly a piece of paper started near his feet and flew along down the pavement. He stood still, rigid, with clenched fists, a flame of agony going over him. And he saw again the unknown, his mother, his eyes. Unconsciously he had been with her, in her company. The walk long of the paper reminded him she was gone. But he had been with her. He wanted everything to stand still, so that he could be with her again.

The days passed, the weeks. But everything seemed to have fused, gone into a conglomerated mass. He could not tell one day from another, one week from another, hardly one place from another. Nothing was distinct or distinguishable. Often he lost himself for an hour at a time, could not remember what he had done.

One evening he came home late to his lodging. The fire was burning low, everybody was in bed. He threw on some more coal, glanced at the table, and decided he wanted no supper. Then he ran down to the armchairs. It was perfectly still. He did not know anything, yet he saw the dark smoke wavering up the chimney. Presently two more came out, cautiously, nibbling the fallen crumbs. He watched them as it were from a long way off. The chairs creak struck two. Far away he could hear the sharp clinking of the trucks on the railway. No, it was not they that were far away. They were there in their places. But where was he himself?

The time passed. The two mice, cowering slyly, snuggled closely over his slippers. He had not moved a muscle. He did not want to move. He was not thinking of anything. It was quiet in. There was no wreck of knowing anything. Then, from time to time, some other consciousness, working mechanically, dashed into sharp phrases.

"What am I doing?"

And one of the semi-interested traces came the answer:

"Destroying myself."

Then a dull, low feeling, gone to an extreme, told him that it was wrong. After a while, suddenly came the question:

"Why wrong?"

Again there was no answer, but a stroke of hot stubbornness inside his chest started his own speculation.

There was a sound of a heavy cart sliding down the road. Suddenly the electric light went out; there was a brushing that

as the people in the dark matter. He did not stir, but was gazing to front of him. Only the men had mounted, and the fire played red in the dark room.

Then, quite mechanically and more dizzily, the conversation began again inside him.

"She's dead. What was it all for—her struggle?"

"That was her danger wanting to go after her."

"You're alone."

"She's not."

"She is—in you."

Suddenly he felt used with the burden of it.

"You've got to keep alive for her sake," said his will to him.

Something hit ugly, as if it would not come.

"You've got to carry forward her living, and what she had done, go on with it."

But he did not want to. He wanted to give up.

"But you can go on with your painting," said the will to him.

"Or else you can have children. They both carry on her effort."

"Painting is not living."

"That lies."

"Marry whom?" came the ugly question.

"As best you can."

"Marry?"

But he did not trust that.

He rose suddenly, went straight to bed. When he got inside his bedroom and closed the door, he stood with clenched teeth.

"Master, my dear——" he began, with the whole force of his soul. Then he stopped. He would not say it. He would not admit that he wanted to die, to have done. He would not own that life had beaten him, or that death had beaten him.

Going straight to bed, he slept at once, abandoning himself to the sleep.

So the weeks went on. Always alone, his soul oscillated, first on the side of death, then on the side of life, dizzily. The real agony was that he had nowhere to go, nothing to do, nothing to say, and was nothing himself. Sometimes he ran down the streets as if he were mad; sometimes he was mad, things weren't there, things were there. It made him panic. Sometimes he stood before the bar of the public-house where he had called for a drink. Everything suddenly went back away from him. He saw the face of the barmaid, the glibbing children, his own glass on the shopped, mahogany board, in the distance. There was something between him and them. He could not get into touch. He did not want them; he did not want his drink. Turning abruptly, he went out.

On the threshold he stood and looked at the lighted room. But he was not of it or in it. Something separated him. Everything went on there below those lamps, about those floor-lamps. He could not get at them. He felt he couldn't touch the lamp-posts, not if he reached. Whom could he go? There was nowhere to go, nowhere back into the sea, or forward anywhere. He felt chilled. There was nowhere for him. The room grew inside him; he felt he should smother.

"I won't," he said; and, turning blindly, he went in and drank. Sometimes the drink did him good, sometimes it made him worse. He ran down the road. For ever restless, he went here, there, everywhere. He determined to work. But when he had made an stride, he loathed the pencil violently, got up, and went away, hurried off to a club where he could play cards or billiards, to a place where he could flirt with a barmaid who was no more to him than the brass pump-handle she drove.

He was very thin and lantern-jawed. He dared not meet his own eyes in the mirror; he never looked at himself. He wanted to get away from himself, but there was nothing to get hold of. In despair he thought of Miriam. Perhaps—perhaps——?

Then, happening to go into the Unitarian Church one Sunday evening, when they stood up to sing the second hymn, he saw her before him. The light glanced on her lower lip as she sang. She looked as if she had got something, at any rate, some hope in heaven, if not on earth. Her comfort and her life seemed in the after-world. A warm, strong feeling for her came up. She seemed to years, at the song, for the despondency and conflict. He put his hope in him. He longed for the season to be over, to speak to her.

The string carried her out just before him. He could nearly touch her. She did not know he was there. He saw the brown, burnished nape of her neck under its black curls. He would leave himself to her. She was better and bigger than he. He would depend on her.

She went wandering, in her blind way, through the lonely throngs of people outside the church. She always looked so lost and out of place among people. He went forward and put his hand on her arm. She started violently. Her great brown eyes dilated in fear, then were questioning at the sight of him. He drew slightly from her.

"I didn't know——" she faltered.

"Nor I," he said.

He looked away. His sudden, flaring hope took again.

"What are you doing in town?" he asked.

"I'm staying at Green Acres."

"Hill. For long?"

"No, only till to-morrow."

"What you go straight home?"

She looked at him, then hid her face under her hat-belt.

"No," she said—"no, it's not necessary."

He hurried away, and she went with him. They threaded through the throng of church-people. The organ was still sounding in St. Mary's. Dark figures came through the lighted doors, people were coming down the steps. The large coloured windows glowed up in the night. The church was like a great lantern suspended. They went down Hollow Road, and he took the car for the Bridges.

"You will just have supper with me," he said. "then I'll bring you back."

"Very well," she replied, low and husky.

They scarcely spoke while they were on the car. The Town ran dark and full under the bridge. Away towards Oldwick all was black night. He lined down Hollow Road, on the naked edge of the town, facing across the river meadows towards the ancient Harwatts and the steep acrop of Oldwick Wood. The floods were up. The stone walls and the ditches spread away on their left. Almost blind, they hurried along by the houses.

Supper was laid. He moved the curtain over the window. There was a bowl of flowers and scarlet anemones on the table. She bent to them. Still watching them with her finger-tips, she looked up at him, saying:

"Aren't they beautiful?"

"Yes," he said. "What will you drink—coffee?"

"I should like it," she said.

"Then excuse me a moment."

He went out to the kitchen.

Miriam took off her things and looked round. It was a bare, square room. Her photo, Clara's, Annie's, were on the wall. She looked on the drawing-board to see what he was doing. There were only a few meaningless lines. She looked to see what book he was reading. Evidently just an ordinary novel. The letters in the stack she saw were from Anna, Arthur, and from some man or other she did not know. Everything he had touched, everything that was in the least personal to him, she examined with lingering absorption. He had been gone from her for so long, she wanted to rediscover him, his position, what he was now. But there was not much in the room to help her. It only made her feel rather odd, it was so hard and comfortable.

She was carefully examining a sketch-book when he returned with the coffee.

"There's nothing new in it," he said, "and nothing very interesting."

He put down the tray, and went to look over her shoulder. She turned the pages slowly, intent on examining everything.

"Hm!" he said, as she passed at a sketch. "I'd forgotten that. It's not bad, is it?"

"No," she said. "I don't quite understand it."

He took the book from her and went through it. Again he made a curious sound of surprise and pleasure.

"There's some not bad stuff in there," he said.

"Not at all bad," she answered gravely.

He felt again her interest in his work. Or was it for himself? Why was she always most interested in him as he appeared in his work?

They sat down to supper.

"By the way," he said, "didn't I hear something about your saving your own living?"

"Yes," she replied, bowing her dark head over her cup.

"And what of it?"

"I'm merely going to the farming college at Birmingham for three months, and I shall probably be kept on as a teacher there."

"I say—that sounds all right for you! You always wanted to be independent."

"Yes."

"Why didn't you tell me?"

"I only knew last week."

"But I heard a month ago," he said.

"Yes, but nothing was settled then."

"I should have thought," he said, "you'd have told me you were trying."

She ate her food in the deliberate, constrained way, almost as if she recalled a pain from doing anything so publicly, that he knew as well.

"I suppose you're glad," he said.

"Very glad."

"Yes—it will be something."

He was rather disappointed.

"I think it will be a great deal," she said, almost laughingly, sweetly.

He laughed shortly.

"Why do you think it would?" she asked.

"Oh, I don't think it won't be a great deal. Only you'll find saving your own living isn't everything."



"No," she said, undisturbed with difficulty; "I don't suppose it is."

"I suppose work can be nearly everything to a man," he said, "though it isn't to me. But a woman only works with a part of herself. The real and vital part is content up."

"But a man can give all himself to a work?" she asked.

"Yes, practically."

"And a woman only the unimportant part of herself?"

"That's it."

She looked up at him, and her eyes dilated with anger.

"Then," she said, "it's true, it's a great shame."

"It is. But I don't leave everything," he answered.

After supper they drove up to the farm. He swung her a chair facing him, and they sat down. She was wearing a dress of dark claret colour, that suited her dark complexion and her large features. Still, the work went fine and free, but her face was much older, the brown throat much thinner. She seemed old to him, older than Clara. Her bloom of youth had quietly gone. A sort of stiffness, almost of woodenness, had come upon her. She meditated a little while, then looked at him.

"And how are things with you?" she asked.

"About all right," he answered.

She looked at him, waiting.

"Now," she said, very low.

Her hands, nervous hands were clasped over her knees. They had all the look of confidence or repose, the almost hysterical look. He waited as he saw them. Then he laughed heartily. She put her fingers between her lips. His slim, black, tapered body lay quite still in the chair. She suddenly took her finger from her mouth and looked at him.

"And you have broken off with Clara?"

"Yes."

His body lay like an abandoned thing, sterner in the chair.

"You know," she said, "I think we ought to be married."

He opened his eyes for the first time since many months, and attended to her with respect.

"Why?" he said.

"See," she said, "how you wear yourself? You ought to die, you might die, and I never know—be no more than that if I had never known you."

"And if we married?" he asked.

"At any rate, I could prevent you wasting yourself and being a prey to other women—like—like Clara."

"A prey?" he repeated, smiling.

She bowed her head in silence. His lap feeling his despair come up again.

"I'm not sure," he said slowly, "that marriage would be much good."

"I only think of you," she replied.

"I know you do. But—you love me so much, you want to put me in your pocket. And I should be there smothered."

She held her hand, put her finger between her lips, while the bitterness surged up in her heart.

"And what will you do otherwise?" she asked.

"I don't know—go on, I suppose. Perhaps I shall soon go abroad."

The despairing doggedness in his tone made her go on her knees on the rug before the fire, very near to him. There she crouched as if she were crushed by something, and could not raise her head. His hands lay quiet next on the arms of his chair. She was aware of them. She felt that now he lay at her mercy. If she could rise, take him, put her arms round him, and say, "You are mine," then he would leave himself to her. But dare she? She could easily sacrifice herself. But dare she marry herself? She was aware of his dark-clothed, slender body, that seemed one stroke of life, spreaded in the chair close to her. But now she dared not put her arms round it, take it up, and say, "It is mine, this body. Leave it to me." And she remained so. It called to all her woman's instinct. But she crouched, and dared not. She was afraid he would not let her. She was afraid it was too much. It lay there, his body, abandoned. She knew she ought to take it up and claim it, and claim every right to it. But—could she do it? Her impotence before him, before the strong demand of some unknown thing in him, was her weakness. Her hands fluttered, she half lifted her head. Her eyes, shuddering, appealing, gone almost dazzled, pleaded to him suddenly. His heart caught with pity. He took her hands, drew her to him, and comforted her.

"Will you have me, to marry me?" he said very low.

Oh, why did not he take her? Her very soul belonged to him. Why would he not take what was his? She had borne so long the cruelty of belonging to him and not being claimed by him. Now he was striking her again. It was too much for her. She drew back her head, held his face between her hands, and looked him in the eyes. No, he was hard. He wanted something else. She pleaded to him with all her love not to make it his choice. She could not cope with it, with him, she knew not with what. But it stunned her till she felt she would break.

"Do you want it?" she asked, very gravely.

"Not much," he replied, with pain.

She turned her face aside, then, raising herself with dignity, she took her hand to her bosom, and soaked him softly. She was not to have him, then! So she could comfort him. She put her fingers through his hair. For her, the unquashed sweetness of self-sacrifice. For him, the love and misery of another Indian. He could not bear it—*that* heart which was warm and which cradled him without taking the burden of him. So much he wanted to rest an hour that the faint of one only touched him. He drew away.

"And without marriage we can do nothing?" he asked.

His mouth was lifted from his teeth with pain. She put her little finger between her lips.

"No," she said, low and like the toll of a bell. "No, I think not."

It was the end then between them. She could not take him and relieve him of the responsibility of himself. She could only sacrifice herself to him—sacrifice herself every day, gladly. And that he did not want. He wanted her to hold him and say, with joy and authority: "Sleep all this restlessness and bending against death. You are mine for a while." She had not the strength. Or was it a state she wanted? or did she want a Christ in him?

He felt, in leaving her, he was defrauding her of life. But he knew that, in staying, stifling the silent, desperate man, he was denying his own life. And he did not hope to give life to her by denying his own.

She sat very quiet. He lit a cigarette. The smoke went up from it, wafting. He was thinking of his mother, and had forgotten Miriam. She suddenly looked at him. Her eyebrows came sweeping up. Her sacrifice, then, was useless. He lay there alone, restless about her. Suddenly she saw again his lack of religion, his earlier masculinity. He would destroy himself like a perverse child. Well, then, he would!

"I think I must go," she said softly.

By her tone he knew she was despoiling him. He rose quietly.

"I'll come along with you," he murmured.

She stood, before the mirror gazing on her hair. How bitter, how unutterably bitter, it made her that he rejected her sacrificial life ahead looked dead, as if the glow were gone out. She bowed her face over the flowers—the flowers so sweet and spring-like, the slender anemones flustering over the table. It was like him to have those flowers.

He moved about the room with a certain awareness of touch, smell and relaxation and quiet. She knew she could not cope with him. He would escape like a winged rat of her hands. Yet without him her life would rot on lifeless breeding, the rot of the flowers.

"Have them!" he said, and he took them out of the jar, dropping as they went, and went quickly into the kitchen. She waited for him, took the flowers, and they went out together, he talking, she feeling dead.

She was going from him now. In her misery she turned against him as they sat on the car. He was unresponsive. Whence would he go? What would be the end of him? She could not bear it, the vacant feeling where he should be. He was so foolish, so wasteful, never at peace with himself. And now where would he go? And what did he care that he wanted her? He had no religion, it was all for the moment's attraction that he cared, nothing else, nothing deeper. Well, she would wait and see how it turned out with him. When he had had enough he would give in and come to her.

He shook hands and left her at the door of her cousin's house. When he turned away he felt the hot field for him had gone. The sun, as he sat upon the car, stretched away over the bay of railway, a level force of light. Beyond the town the country, little considering space for more space—the sea—the night—*no end at all!* And he had no place in it! Wherever upon he stood on, there he stood alone. From his lungs, from his mouth, strong the endless space, and it was there behind him, everywhere. The people hurrying along the streets offered no obstruction to the void in which he found himself. They were small shadows whose footstep and voice could be heard, but in each of them the same night, the same silence. He got off the car. In the country all was dead still. Little stars shone high up, little stars spread far away in the flood-waters, a firmament below. Everywhere the vastness and error of the immense night which is round and stored for a brief while by the day, but which returns, and will remain at last eternal, holding everything in its silence and its living gloom. There was no Time, only space. Who could say his mother had lived and did not live? She had been in one place, and was in another; that was all. And he and could not leave her, whatever she was. Now she was gone ahead into the night, and he was with her still. They were together. But yet there was his body, his chest, thus flamed against the still, his hands on the wooden bar. They seemed something. Where was he!—one tiny upright spark of flesh, less than an ear of wheat lost in the field. He could not

hear it. On every side the loudest dark silence seemed pressing him, to try a speech, into extinction, and yet, almost nothing, he could not be extinct. Night, in which everything was lost, went reaching out, beyond stars and sun. Stars and sun, a few bright grains, went spinning round for sense, and holding each other in embrace, there is a darkness that outpoured them all, and left them tiny and doomed. So much, and himself, infinitesimal, at the core of nothingness, and yet not nothing.

"Mother!" he whispered—"mother!"

She was the only thing that held him up, himself, amid all this. And she was gone, intermingled herself. He wanted her to touch him, have him alongside with her.

But no, he would not give in. Turning sharply, he walked towards the city's gold phosphorescence. His feet were dead, his mouth set fast. He would not take that direction, to the darkness, to follow her. He walked towards the faintly humming, glowing town, quickly.



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